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No. 83

N° 83

ISSN 1180-2987



**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 22 February 2011**

**Mardi 22 février 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 22 February 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 22 février 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence of inner thought and personal reflection.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT DES COLLECTIVITÉS FORTES GRÂCE AU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 9, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2011, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 140, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement, abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la réforme du logement social et apportant des modifications corrélatives et autres à d'autres lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an honour and a privilege to start off with an hour lead on housing in this new session. I want to welcome everyone back from the break, which I know for many members of provincial Parliament wasn't a break, so to speak, but was a chance to get back to our constituencies.

I also want to welcome back the clerks and the staff here at Queen's Park, and the new pages. I think they deserve a round of applause for all their hard work. Welcome back, everyone. I also want to compliment the Speaker on his new beard; it goes very well with the hat.

Certainly, I think all of Ontario hopes that this last session of this presently constituted government actually affords some change, a great deal of hard work and progress in the province of Ontario. I know that when speaking to my constituents over the break, one of the things that they find very frustrating is the level of rancour in the House. What they would love to see is in fact all sides of the House working together to actually, in this case, provide housing for Ontarians. We have a very dismal housing reality in this province, and certainly it's incumbent upon us all to work together to provide more housing to those in need in Ontario.

I know that often, the way that we conduct business in political parties in Ontario, one would think that we all want a one-party state, but I hope I speak for everyone in saying that's the furthest from our desires. Again, hopefully in the last few weeks remaining to us some significant changes are made.

I want to start off talking about housing by talking about an incident that really galvanized my thoughts about the necessity for housing in this province. When I was still in the ministry, actively in the pulpit and in a church, Emmanuel Howard Park, we woke up one day to a trailer in our parking lot. It had no right to be there, so we went over and knocked on the window, and discovered that inside was a young girl and her father who were living in the trailer. They asked if there was any possibility that they could park their trailer in the parking lot of the church because otherwise they would have to pay for parking somewhere else. Not only could they not afford to pay for parking, it was very clear that they couldn't afford to pay for housing.

This young girl was about nine years old at the time; she was attending school in our area. Of course, without a moment's hesitation, the board of the church said, "Let them stay," and proceeded to try to work with them to find them permanent housing, to no avail.

That was years ago, but that was very clearly an insight into what was going on. The little girl attended school every day and went back to live in the trailer every night. She looked like any other child in school. I'm sure her teachers had absolutely no idea of where she actually spent her nights. Her father was desperately looking for a job. Of course, it's almost impossible to find a job if you don't have a residence—and, in those days, if you didn't have a phone as well. We as a church provided him with a cellphone.

Then, many months later, after the school year was up, we all went to church one day to find that the trailer was gone. Who knows what happened to that little girl, and who knows if that family ever found housing? Such is the state of those who are in need in one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the world, and that continues to this day.

Before us on the table today is government Bill 140. This is a long-awaited bill; it was supposed to have been delivered in the spring. Finally, months and months later, it was delivered to this House last November. Certainly it was the result of much consultation with housing activists and providers across the province of Ontario. They greeted this with some excitement, only to open the bill and then witness what they didn't want to see, which was that there was very, very little done.

In fact, in this bill—and I'll repeat this many times, because this is a critical and central point—there is not one new unit of affordable housing provided. In this bill there is not one new dollar of rent supplements provided. In this bill there is not one new unit of affordable housing built, and in this bill there is no mention of inclusionary zoning whatsoever, which, if we remember, was passed in second reading by this House—my bill, the New Democrats' bill—and was supported by a vast majority of municipalities across the province, because inclusionary zoning doesn't cost one tax dollar. All that my bill allowed was that municipalities could step up to the plate and enact legislation, if they so desired, to have inclusionary zoning. That decision would not then be immediately appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board, which is what would happen right now.

So here we have a bill purportedly responding to the lack of affordable housing in this province and, in fact, delivering nothing: not one new unit, not one new dollar, not one new significant change that would allow for one new unit or one new dollar into affordable housing.

A few grim statistics—let's start with those, to show how bad the situation is in Ontario for affordable housing activists. First of all, 1.3 million Ontarians are precariously housed; that is, 1.3 million Ontarians pay more than 30% of their income on housing. One hundred and twenty thousand Ontario families live in overcrowded housing. Eighty thousand Ontarians live in substandard housing that requires major repairs. I wonder if that little girl who was living in our church parking lot would be included in that number. One hundred and forty thousand and counting—it's now up to around 142,000—households are on affordable housing waiting lists. This is a number, by the way, which increased by 10% in one year, from 2009 to 2010—10% in one year. And by the way, when you say “waiting,” we are talking about waits that now exceed 10 years on average, so many people literally die on affordable housing waiting lists.

Housing insecurity is rising, of course, because energy costs have gone up more than 50% in the last decade, and of course, as will be a major topic of this session in this House, we know that energy prices are probably going to go up another 50%. Again, that attacks most those who can afford it least.

The incomes of tenants—just generally, incomes have stagnated or decreased. A wonderful study by David Hulchanski at the University of Toronto looked at the city, the GTA, in terms of how the decline of the middle class has affected neighbourhoods. You virtually see it there, in not so black and white. I think it's brown and green. You see the areas of poverty increasing and moving to the suburbs. You see the areas of wealth increasing and moving to the interior of the city and you see the middle class emptying out. That's the tale of our city. That's the tale of Ontario, as well.

0910

Half of all renters in Ontario pay more than 50% of their income on rent, and more than half of all renters, as you can imagine—so say the experts—cannot then afford

to pay for other necessities. They're scrimping on food or they're scrimping on necessary school items because so much of their income is going to rent. We know this not only because we see these horrendous statistics, but because we go out into our ridings and we meet with folk who are in exactly that predicament. Of course, it's not an even predicament either. It doesn't affect all Ontarians the same. It affects women far more, children far more; it affects people of colour far more and new immigrants and refugees far more. We know, again, that like the chicken and the egg, lack of housing produces poverty and poverty produces lack of housing etc.

We in the New Democratic Party have responded to this. We've responded with several key bills and motions that are before this House. We've responded, for one, with something that is, one would think, a no-brainer: that housing is a human right. This is a United Nations statement. This is a United Nations resolution that simply says that housing is a human right. I proposed this in a motion before this House, certainly to no acceptance on the other side. One has to raise one's eyebrows: Is the government then saying that housing isn't a human right? I would love to hear from members opposite on this very issue. Is housing not a human right or is it? Is this House in accord with the United Nations recommendations or isn't it? If housing is a human right, and if we pass such a motion as a House, then presumably those who are ill-housed, underhoused or not housed at all could then have recourse to force this government into doing what this government should be doing, and that is providing housing as a human right.

We also put on the table a motion to build 10,000 new units of housing a year. This is what all housing activists are asking across the province of Ontario. This very government, in 2003, promised 20,000 new-build units of affordable housing in their first four years. You'll see, as I continue to speak, how of course that promise has not been upheld. In fact, what's affordable and what's not affordable is part of the problem in definitions, because if you are on Ontario disability, are earning around \$1,000 a month and should be paying \$250 to \$300 on rent, according to anti-poverty activists and in fact economists generally, you're not going to find housing in the province of Ontario. To make matters worse, imagine if you're an Ontario Works recipient and you're earning just over \$500 a month. As one Ontario Works recipient said just recently to an interfaith gathering on the topic of poverty and housing, “What does the government expect me to do—steal?” Imagine making \$500 a month and trying to live in the city of Toronto. I mean, we know what that life looks like. It looks like homelessness. It looks like food banks. It certainly doesn't look like anybody who can afford anything in the way of housing.

We also brought forward—and, as I mentioned, it passed second reading, so presumably there was support on all sides—inclusionary zoning. My bill was a very tepid one, quite frankly. It simply said, “Let's get out of the way of inclusionary zoning so that municipalities across the province of Ontario, if they so choose, could

bring in inclusionary zoning.” Because inclusionary zoning is in jurisdictions around the world—and even in Canada, in Vancouver—we know that inclusionary zoning—which is, for those who are new to the term, requiring that developers, for example, of over 50 units set aside as rent-to-own or affordable rental units at least 10% of those units. In some jurisdictions it goes up to 25% of those units. It doesn’t cost a tax dollar. In fact, it produces wealth in communities. In jurisdictions where it’s put into place, like Boston, you see at least 1,000 new units of housing a year being produced.

We, by very, very rough calculations, figured that if inclusionary zoning was brought in across Ontario at the conservative rate of 10%, we would produce—this is based on the number of new units that have been developed in the province of Ontario in any given year in the last 10 years—about 12,000 new units of housing a year. That’s not going to be the entire answer for the 140,000-plus families waiting for affordable housing, but it certainly will be a significant part of the answer, and again, a significant part of the answer without costing a tax dollar.

Even in conversations with developers—when times are tough, this would actually assist developers. Certainly municipalities have been very creative in other jurisdictions when they’ve brought in inclusionary zoning; for example, if they’ve done bylaw changes allowing an extra floor in a building that could be the affordable housing floor etc. There are lots of creative ways of using inclusionary zoning to produce affordable housing at no cost to taxpayers. Yet even though they said they supported this bill, when it came time to introduce their housing bill, government Bill 140, there is not a mention of inclusionary zoning in it, despite this uniformly being a call from all housing activists across Ontario.

We’ve also introduced a bill on tenants’ rights and landlord licensing. Quite frankly, I’ve spent some of my time during this break—and I will be spending some time this afternoon—going to visit my low-income tenants about the landlord licensing idea. I have yet to find one tenant who objects to it.

What is landlord licensing? Landlord licensing just simply says that where city work orders are held against a building—for example, in one of my buildings, an eight-storey building, there was one elevator out of order for three months, and there were seniors living on the eighth floor. Of course there were work orders against this building. Was the landlord in compliance? Absolutely not. Landlord licensing would force bad landlords into compliance for work orders simply by refusing to renew their licence to rent to new tenants if they didn’t comply. As I’ve argued in this House before, this is one of the only ways of forcing—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Excuse me. Sorry to interrupt you. I just want to remind members that we have one person speaking and the conversations should be taken outside.

Please continue.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I’ve argued in this House before that this is one of the only ways we have of really

assuring ourselves that landlords are going to deal with that tricky and pesky problem of bedbugs. When I go to see tenants in some of the low-income, privately held housing stock in my riding, they complain of bedbugs, and they complain that they’ve tried to clean up their units, but it’s impossible because it comes in from somewhere else. Even the good landlords who have taken good care of their properties complain about this, because they say that the building next door, where the landlord hasn’t complied with work orders—the bedbugs infect their properties from next door. So again, we have to have some way, as the province, of forcing people to do necessary work. Bedbugs is a classic instance of a problem that’s not going to stay within a building. If one bad landlord exists, that affects and infects everyone.

Again, landlord licensing is a simple idea, a self-funding idea, that would allow the province to insist on compliance with work orders, something that’s not happening now across Ontario. Of course it’s not happening in the wealthy areas or luxury apartments; it’s happening in the low-income tenanted areas, of which I have many in my riding.

Also, every housing activist—for years now, quite frankly, and certainly in consultation with the government—put forward five essentials for any adequate housing policy. I’m going to go over them in a bit of detail because they’re critical, and I’m going to compare what the housing activists have asked for and then contrast what they’ve asked for with what they’ve received in Bill 140.

Test number one—all the housing activists have asked for this:

“Bold targets and sustained funding

“A long-term affordable housing strategy must ensure an adequate supply of quality, affordable housing for Ontarians, supported by multi-year financial commitments.” The Ontario government should commit to funding a housing program—again, here are those 10,000 new units of universally accessible, affordable non-profit and co-op housing units for 10 years.

By the way, if we want to compare ourselves to somebody who’s doing it right, my husband and I, a few years back, were in Sweden. Sweden, a country much smaller than Ontario—there are nine million people in Sweden; we have about 13 million in Ontario—produced 100,000 new units of affordable housing a year. They called it their million-home program, and it was a 10-year program. Needless to say, they don’t have an affordable housing crisis in Sweden the way we do here. And Sweden isn’t alone in providing that. Many jurisdictions do better than we do; in fact, we have one of the worst records provincially and one of the worst records internationally. Also, provide funding so that at least 50% of these units can provide rent-geared-to-income assistance.

0920

What’s in this announcement, with government Bill 140? As I said, not one new dollar; as they point out, “no new funding”—not one new unit—“no multi-year commitment, no innovative financing options, no strength-

ening of development/technical capacity of the sector” to provide housing. These are the housing activists themselves that supposedly this government consulted with.

“Test two: A solid measuring stick

“An effective housing strategy requires a solid foundation of accurate evidence about the scale of housing insecurity and homelessness in Ontario and a clear way to measure progress. Housing measures must track progress on whether actions taken under the long-term affordable housing strategy are systematically reducing the number of households”—but we know that’s not so. We know they’re not reducing the number of households on affordable housing lists. The empirical data is unequivocal on that point. In fact, it went up 10% in one year. It’s going up every year and the wait is getting longer—“and addressing the housing affordability problem through consistent annual reductions in the percentage of Ontario tenants spending 30% or more of income on housing.” We know it’s going directly in the opposite direction, that more and more tenants are spending more and more of their income on rental. By the way, coupled with that—because, remember, there was a time in Canada where the middle class dream was to own your own home—is the complete lack of affordability in our major centres for young couples and young families who try to ever even dream of owning a home.

I often tell the story, just by contrast, that I grew up in a Toronto and an Ontario where on one salary you could own a home and pay it off in your lifetime, a car in the driveway and, for a lucky few, a cottage as well. Now it takes two incomes, and even then in the city of Toronto you’re barely able to afford an apartment. Certainly you’re going to have to have two incomes to afford a car, and only the wealthy can afford another rural property or cottage. That is the change in one lifetime in the province of Ontario, and it’s getting worse. We’re on a downward descent. Our children will be worse off than us, and if we don’t stem the tide, our grandchildren even worse off than they are.

Another issue that this policy does not address is improving access to suitable and adequate affordable housing for members of marginalized groups, including aboriginal people, communities of colour, people with disabilities and mental health issues, lone mothers and people living in rural and northern communities.

Here is what is in the bill, according to housing activists: The “Ontario housing measure only covers families with children—the rest of Ontarians” are completely left out. That’s a very sad reality, because in my riding, and I’m sure this is replicated across the province, the greatest demand for housing, as I’ve mentioned before, is often for those on Ontario disability and those with mental health and addiction issues. Often those are the people hardest and most expensive to house in supportive housing, because there’s virtually no supportive housing, and most at risk. Most of our homeless population at any given time will fall into that category. They are homeless for a reason, and they die on our streets. I know that the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee should be commended

for being one of the few groups that actually acknowledges their deaths anymore, that actually remembers them into the community of the living on a regular basis. It used to be considered a disaster in the city of Toronto that we had some 5,000 sleeping on grates at night, and now, again, we’ve come so far—we’ve sunk so far—that we ignore them. We step over them and sometimes don’t even see them anymore. That’s how routine it has come to be in my city that we see somebody sleeping outside in the cold.

A solid measuring stick: Unfortunately, the measuring sticks that we have show that the numbers are trending in all the wrong directions.

Test three, they say, is accountability. “Ontario’s long-term affordable housing strategy needs to be kept on track, and the plan must remain accountable to the people it intends to serve.” Accountability measures should include: annual public reporting on progress; committing to ongoing public consultation; local control of program design and delivery; setting up a residents’ review committee; and appointing a full-time Minister of Housing to ensure that affordable housing is a government priority—we’ve had four Ministers of Housing since I’ve been here, and it never gets better; it only gets worse.

Here’s what housing activists say, again, about this bill. “Promise of annual reports”—yes, it’s there. The province says, however, that municipalities will have to engage the community; it’s not interested in doing that. And it’s saying that the current minister must share housing and municipal affairs responsibilities. So it’s a devaluing of that particular portfolio.

“Test four: Make housing truly affordable and accessible

“All Ontarians should be able to access housing they can afford....”

Again, the United Nations said it best. Why isn’t the reality here?

They suggest introducing a monthly universal housing benefit for low-income Ontarians, expanding the priority list for social housing, funding retrofits, and providing funding for at least 2,000 new supportive housing units.

In terms of supportive housing, I have a couple of stories from my riding, both from serving there as the member of provincial Parliament and as a United Church minister, about the necessity for supportive housing. One’s a sad tale about a young man who suffered from a mental health issue. He lived in Queen’s Park—I’m sorry, not Queen’s Park. We should have more homeless people living in Queen’s Park. Maybe then we’d take the issue seriously. He lived in High Park for many years and was finally found housing—he was on the wait-list for a long, long time—but because of his mental health issues, he was unable to keep his housing. I know that those who provide affordable housing often come up against this intractable problem. Those who have mental health issues—those who are hoarders, for example—who really are a danger to themselves and others, need more than just a box to live in. They need supports. They need social workers. They need someone to make sure that

they successfully live in affordable housing. Those supports aren't there, and those supportive housing units aren't there.

On the plus side, after many, many years of trying, we finally got the Edmond Yu centre built in my riding—and this is kudos to the Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre—providing about 35 units of supportive housing where they had 10 before. In fact, it's going to be 45 in total. They're up and running, and I was delighted to finally be at the ribbon-cutting for that, but it took them a decade. As long as I can remember, they have been trying to get the Edmond Yu centre built. For those of you who don't know the story of Edmond Yu, it's a classic tale of the necessity of supportive housing. He was a young man who suffered from mental health issues, who ended up being killed. He was shot by a police officer because he was wielding a hammer on a downtown Toronto street corner. People were genuinely frightened. Here was a young man who had been homeless for so long, who needed supports, who needed a worker, who needed more than just a box to live in. Unfortunately for Edmond, but fortunately for others, the Edmond Yu centre has finally been built—but it took way too long. For 35 new units it took 10 years, with 140,000-plus people waiting. We simply can't go about it in that piecemeal, red-tape-buried way that we have in the past.

Again, where does this bill go short? There's no commitment to the Ontario housing benefit; just a vague promise to explore this and other options. There's no commitment to new funding for supportive housing. The Ontario emergency energy fund is to be rolled into consolidated initiatives, but there's no commitment to new funding; no affordable home ownership options. That's what's in the bill.

To reiterate my main theme, here is a government housing strategy with not one new dollar for affordable housing, not one new unit to be built of affordable housing, not one new dollar in rent-gear-to-income supplements, and no inclusionary zoning to allow the private sector to fill in the gaps—none of the above.

“Test five: Reform housing legislation to build stronger communities

“Key legislation that governs municipal planning, social housing and the private rental market must be reformed to promote growth in affordable housing, better protect the housing rights of tenants and provide flexibility for non-profit and co-operative housing providers.”

0930

I know that out of my office, we're trying to work on a new co-op. It may not even be built in my riding. We've had a bit of a seed grant to do that. We've got people interested. We're looking for the land right now. I fully expect that this will be a multi-year project, to provide, again, perhaps 80 to 100 new units. But with 140,000-plus people waiting on the affordable housing list, how is this piecemeal approach ever going to get us there?

Again, from the housing activists' point of view—and they are legion—here's what they say: Yes, there are some changes to the SHRA on rent rules; those are good.

But there's no promise to amend the Residential Tenancies Act. There's no inclusionary housing commitment, which I've said again, and the promise to expand use of secondary rental units in new and existing developments is all that we have. But again, not one new dollar, not one new unit, not one extra rental supplement—nothing concrete. As one housing activist said, it was like putting up the scaffolding and then walking away from the building site. There's no house there.

One aspect of this, of course—and I imagine that those who are listening and watching this first day of the session of the Ontario Parliament in action will wonder, “Well, perhaps the reason this government hasn't been more forthcoming in building rental units”—in fact, not at all; not one new rent-gear-to-income suite, no inclusionary zoning, nothing of concrete status in this new bill—“is that they don't have any money.” We have to admit, we in the opposition—and the government side, too—that that's partly true. This government doesn't have any money. This government's working deficit, \$18.5 billion or so, is more than all the other provinces' combined. They've actually doubled our structural debt in the seven years they've been in office. That's not a pretty picture.

But here's the reality of the economy of housing: It costs literally more dollars and cents to keep someone underhoused or homeless than it does to provide housing for them. Here I absolutely give kudos to those who have done these studies. There are now studies done in every major urban centre across North America. A recent one in Vancouver showed the highest cost yet, but let's take the one that is about seven years old from New York city that showed that it cost about \$55,000 a year to keep someone homeless.

That's kind of counterintuitive, until you start thinking about it. Because to keep someone homeless, you need extra money into the justice system, into emergency health care and, of course, rehab systems. You need shelters. You need more social workers. The actual cost of keeping someone homeless is more than it would cost to put someone into a hotel every night, just about. That's the stupidity of the current action plan of this government, which is non-action: it's costing more. Not just in the long run, where it could be argued it costs way more, because again, we're talking about poverty generation to generation and the cost of that, but it costs more in the short term.

I remember that one of my first committee moments here in this House was when Mr. Gerretsen was the housing minister. It was on government finances, and we got to ask questions about how money was spent and wasn't spent on housing. He admitted in Hansard, on record, that it would cost less to put someone in a motel or a hotel than to keep the current system going.

We have about 5,000 people on the streets of the city, many of whom will die this winter from complications due to homelessness and poverty. This is insanity. Isn't that the statement, that insanity is doing the same things you've always done and expecting different results?

Well, governments—this one included—have for a long time turned their backs on the housing file entirely; done very little, if anything at all; made gestures. And let's face it; this bill is a gesture in the direction of housing. It's a gesture. It has nothing concrete in it. It reduces red tape a little bit. It helps a little bit here and there, tweaks around the edges, but there's not one new unit, not one new dollar, not one new rent supplement in this bill.

As long as governments continue to tread water on the housing file, the cost mounts. The last study that was done on the cost of homelessness and underhousing in Vancouver showed it costs \$75,000 a year to keep somebody homeless—\$75,000 a year to keep someone homeless. This is insanity. This is also cruel. I mean, Scrooge comes to mind, eh? "Are there no workhouses? Are there no prisons?" Unfortunately, that is our housing strategy: There are prisons, and that's where a lot of those with mental health and addiction issues who haven't got supportive housing end up. And we all know the cost of keeping someone in prison. Last I heard, it was around the \$60,000 mark. So will we provide more prisons, or will we provide more housing? That's the choice before us, really. We've always opted for the prisons. Sad.

When you hear what housing activists who are in the field, who do nothing but housing, who look at housing issues all the time, have to say about this bill, it's pretty uniform. Here is something from the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, and Harvey Cooper, who is the manager of government relations. I'm sure everybody in this House knows Harvey; he has visited us all often enough. "Cooper says that this approach," Bill 140, "fails to recognize that construction of affordable housing has a major stimulative impact and can play a key role in the economic recovery while reducing poverty and providing a valuable public asset for the long term." He goes on, to quote: "We agree with the province that the federal government has a responsibility to continue to support affordable housing as it has done in the past," Cooper says. "But"—a critical "but" here—"in presenting its vision for affordable housing, the Ontario government should look to lead, not follow. Its long-term plan should be grounded in a commitment to funding affordable housing as a core, continuing government program."

Again, those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it. If we look at the New Deal, even from the Roosevelt era, how do you respond to economic bad times? Well, this government has responded to economic bad times by giving incredible corporate welfare hand-outs. This government has given \$4.5 billion to corporations, so that we have the lowest corporate tax rate in North America. That's how this government believes a bad economic time should be dealt with. It's the old trickle-down theory, and in fact what's happening is a more gushing-up theory. The poor are getting poorer; the wealthy are getting wealthier. The trickle-down theory we know doesn't work. What works, and we've seen it over and over again in response to bad times, is to build,

build, build. Infrastructure investment, new builds, new housing—that helps. This government isn't doing that.

Probably the best-known housing advocate and housing expert in Ontario is David Hulchanski. David Hulchanski is a professor at the University of Toronto; he turns out amazing work on housing and has done a phenomenal study on, essentially, Poverty By Postal Code—that was the United Way moniker—and he has provided some background to that. Here is what he says in conclusion: "The provincial and municipal governments could implement specific policies to help maintain and promote mixed neighbourhoods. These include"—guess what's first?—"inclusionary zoning, whereby any medium-to-large residential developments must include," he suggests, "15% or 20% rental and affordable units. Also, the province of Ontario could keep its promise to end vacancy decontrol—the right of landlords to charge what-ever they wish for a rental unit when a tenant moves," and thereby discourage "the displacement of low-income residents in gentrifying areas." We certainly are seeing this in Parkdale. Certainly, we're seeing this. Certainly, we're noticing gentrification.

It almost sounds like a black joke that those who live in rental accommodation in Parkdale, which used to be one of the most affordable areas in the downtown core, can't afford to buy and can't afford to rent in Parkdale anymore. Down on Jameson, which is where most new immigrants and refugees end up living—because still there are about 10,000 so-called affordable housing units; that is to say, one-bedrooms renting at around the \$900 mark. So you find new immigrants and refugees housed together, many of them who let others in their communities know, and pretty soon you have a whole building, for example, almost full of Tibetans, which we have in south Parkdale. It used to be that's where they'd start, but unfortunately, that's where they're ending up now because they can't afford to move out.

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If they do move out or they can't afford even the \$900 a month, which often happens, and they get evicted eventually, guess what happens to that unit? New appliances go in, a coat of paint gets slapped on, the foyer gets jazzed up and the unit goes from \$900 a month to \$1,500 a month. And guess what? It's not occupied by new immigrants or people of colour or single-headed families anymore. It's now occupied by a whole other group. In fact, we're seeing that happening in those buildings: the gentrification bit by bit of buildings that were built in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and on.

This is a sad day, because it means again that David Hulchanski's study is even more right: that poverty is being moved out to the 905 areas. It's being moved out to the edge of Toronto, and the downtown core isn't for the poor anymore. That's the sad reality, a reality that certainly affects my riding. In our local high school, Parkdale high school, we have 65 mother tongues spoken. And that will change. It will change substantially not only the tenor of my neighbourhood but the tenor of all the downtown core, which we celebrate as being

multicultural. Well, that multiculturalism is based on some affordable housing prices still, and as that affordable housing goes, so goes the multiculturalism. And that's sad. That's sad, and that's happening. It's happening under our eyes.

If anybody doubts my word, I highly recommend *The Three Cities Within Toronto*, which is about income polarization among Toronto's neighbourhoods and is a real landmark study—again, David Hulchanski. That's what he says. He says, "What do we need?" He says we need, first and foremost, inclusionary zoning.

Here's what other groups have to say about Bill 140. The Housing Network of Ontario says: "The Ontario government has proposed some new legislation and administrative procedures that are useful and important, but the essential items for a long-term affordable housing plan—targets, timeline, and, most of all—money—"funding over a multi-year period—are missing." This is where I got that quote. "It's like they've put up the scaffolding but then forgot to give the workers the tools that they need to get the job done." That's from perhaps the largest of our housing activists.

We all know ACORN as being an incredible group of people across North America who have worked with low-income tenants as their primary group and primarily advocated for affordable housing. This is what they said about Bill 140: "There was much hope that after more than six months of consultations, over 1,000 written submissions, and a full year of writing, that Premier McGuinty and his administration would provide a bold vision for affordable housing in Ontario.

"They did not. Instead, they opted to package a handful of reforms as a comprehensive housing plan while failing to act on key areas that ACORN members, tenants, housing experts and others had been advocating for."

Again, they say: "There is no commitment to new provincial operating or capital dollars for housing;"—none whatsoever—"no mention of inclusionary zoning enabling legislation even after key members of the provincial government voted in support of an NDP private member's bill on the subject; no housing benefit to address the rising cost of housing among the working poor." A housing benefit is a direct subsidy to low-income tenants to help them pay their rent. That's what ACORN says.

Here's what the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, which comprises 755 member organizations, says about Bill 140: "While the strategy includes a focus on streamlining some administrative aspects of the rent-geared-to-income housing system and increased flexibility for both local communities and tenants, it does not address the critical need for increased investment in new development and the ongoing maintenance of existing properties—key public assets that must be protected for future generations...." However, "the potential of any strategy cannot be fully realized unless it is properly funded.... We would encourage the government to continue providing even limited funding in this current

economic climate and to adopt some of the innovative financing solutions that the community-based housing sector will be proposing."

I mean, sometimes when you hear these housing activists, you detect a hint of pleading now, pleading in their quotes and their write-ups of this bill, because after seven years of coming, weeping almost, to the doors of power here, this is what they get. This is what they get: a little rescinding of the red tape, but not one new housing dollar, not one new housing unit, not one new rent-geared-to-income supplement, and no inclusionary zoning. This is what isn't in this bill, and this is what is critical in any sort of housing policy.

Often what's sad in beginning a political life is that you realize that that great quote is so true: "Politics is the art of the possible." But really, what's possible and what's delivered by this current administration are now even chasms apart. What's possible for this current administration is to actually look at the numbers, to understand that investment in housing pays, that it doesn't cost; to understand that infrastructure investment—new builds, like they originally promised back in 2003—works to help the economy; that giving away money in terms of corporate tax cuts to the largest and most profitable corporations in the province of Ontario doesn't work in creating jobs, in providing housing and in alleviating poverty. That doesn't work, but infrastructure development does. That's what's lacking here.

It's really also not even about partisanship, because I remember—my goodness, I've said it before here: Bill Davis looks like a socialist in comparison to Dalton McGuinty. In Mel Lastman's day we had more housing going on in this province, new-build housing.

We had, in fact, David Crombie—a tiny, perfect Conservative mayor—come to speak to our Parkdale Visioning. We had him come to speak to us about how he ever got the St. Lawrence Market rebuilt off the ground, kind of the gold standard for housing of its day. It still is, unfortunately, across North America and sometimes around the world. How do you take these old, often polluted, lands, turn them into a mix of co-ops and affordable market-driven places to live, and make it a wonderful place to live around a landmark like the St. Lawrence Market? This is the gold standard. We had him come to talk to us about how he did that. He gave us some sad news. He said that you have to have governments on your side.

Well, we don't have this government on our side. Otherwise, we would see exactly that kind of redevelopment, and we would see it frequently, because it's what is needed in all areas of Toronto. Otherwise, we will be doomed to David Hulchanski's vision of our future, because it's happening as we speak; that is, a polarized, divided Ontario, where the wealthy live in little gated enclaves, where the poor live in substandard housing—if they live in housing at all, or sleep on grates in our city streets—and where the middle class disappears, empties out, because nobody can afford being middle class anymore. They can't afford the house and

the car anymore. Is that the Ontario we want? I hope not. I really hope not.

It's interesting, I remember a Peter Ustinov quote about the city of Toronto that is sad now to repeat. I think he uttered it in the 1970s, when he was still alive, of course. He said that Toronto is New York designed by the Swiss. Boy, oh, boy. Look at our GTA and look at our province now. Is that what you'd say about where we live now? I don't think so, certainly not in my neighbourhood.

When I grew up in Toronto and my father spoke about food banks and the use of food banks and spoke about people riding the rails in the Depression, I thought, "Never again. How could that ever happen?" And now we see, and have seen under this current administration here, food banks proliferate. There are more food banks in the city of Toronto, than McDonald's now—more food banks than McDonald's. That's the reality of life in this province now. That's in one lifetime. And it's getting worse; it's not getting better.

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My friends from across the way like to, of course, take partisan shots at other parties—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Truly, but this happened under the seven years of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal watch. This happened under the Liberal watch in the last seven years. That's the reality. It's become worse: less housing, more families on the waiting lists, longer waiting times, more precarious housing, more renters who can't afford the basic necessities of life. That's happened here. At some point, when you have a majority government, you have to take ownership of what your jurisdiction looks like. This is what Ontario looks like, and this is a jurisdiction that gave us this Ontario—seven years.

I'm not going to let the federal government off the hook, either. We have long called for a national housing strategy. The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee has long asked for the 1% solution—1% of the budget to go to housing. We're still asking for that federally. We still need that federally to get out of the bind we're in. But there's so much more that could happen here and doesn't because of the short-sighted thinking. It's a kind of thinking that says, "It costs money, it doesn't make money, to invest in affordable housing. It costs money, it doesn't make money, to help people rise above the poverty line. It costs money, it doesn't make money, to put infrastructure front and centre and new-build affordable housing front and centre." That's the kind of short-sighted, conservative vision, quite frankly, that has caused this problem in the first place. "Let's leave housing up to the private sector." That has given us the Ontario that we live in right now. "Let's get governments out of the business of housing"—I mean, good grief, that's a libertarian notion, and that's essentially the philosophy of the McGuinty government. A Liberal Party with a libertarian notion: Get government out of the housing business. That's what we've got in Ontario.

It couldn't get more conservative. In fact, as I've shown, Conservatives did it better at times. They were less conservative and less libertarian than our current Liberal administration. It's sad but true from the New Democratic point of view, and sad but true from the point of view of those who live on those waiting lists. It's true for them as well.

I grew up in a Toronto that didn't have shelters. It also didn't have the corporate tax breaks that are now in place in Ontario. Is there a corollary here? I say that there are many corollaries between the rich getting richer and the lack of affordable housing on the other end of the income spectrum. There's a reason why Hulchanski's Toronto looks the way it does, and the reason always falls at the feet of government. That's what's happened. It's very sad.

So what we're talking about here, for those who've just tuned in, in the very first session back, just to set the tone for the new session, I've suggested to everyone here that we work together to change Ontario. People are tired of the bickering that goes back and forth. I'm suggesting that here we have a scaffolding in Bill 140; that this bill, hopefully, will go to committee; that this bill will hopefully be dealt with by a succession of housing activists, who will say pretty much what I've said here today—in fact, I've quoted from them and their statistics and their five-point plan to provide housing to Ontarians; and that we'll make significant amendments.

Significant amendments to this bill will include dollars, will include new bills, will include inclusionary zoning, will include more rent supplements, and will include, in fact, money in for more money out at the other end of the spectrum, because we know now—we can't pretend we don't know what we know studies have shown—that it costs more money to keep people underhoused and homeless than it does to house them; that, simply in dollars and cents, it costs more; and that, long term, it costs even more to keep the poor impoverished—we know that. There's no excuse not to prime the pump with funding now, so that the economy can improve later. This is a far better use of our tax dollars, scarce as they are, than putting money in at the top by giving some of the wealthiest corporations in Ontario huge tax breaks, making us the cheapest place to do business in North America for them and hoping that some of that money somehow trickles down so that somebody, one of the 142,000 on the housing waiting list, might actually someday find a place to live.

I started off also in talking about that little girl who lived in our church parking lot in a trailer with her father. It's been many years since that moment in our church history and our community's history. She was simply one of the ones we discovered. We knew her name; we knew what she looked like. We saw her father. We knew that if they walked along any street in any city in Ontario, they would pass as just your middle-class folk. We knew that the reality was anything but.

We know now that those who are lining up to use food banks are also the same as those who are lining up for

affordable housing, and we know that those lining up for affordable housing and those lining up for food banks are, by and large, now working people. This is a significant shift as well, which points to other measures that need to be implemented. But here's the problem: After months of consultations, thousands of pages of written submissions, a uniform cry from housing activists and housing organizations across Ontario for five basic steps, this government has delivered none of the above. Not one new dollar, not one new unit, not one new rent-geared-to-income supplement and not any, of course, inclusionary zoning. No requests there whatsoever.

So I suspect that that little girl, if the trajectory holds—and we know this from studies, again, that have been done by experts across North America; that if you start out homeless, it's very difficult to pull yourself up by the bootstraps from that existence. That in fact, contrary to Horatio Alger myths, the reality is that she'll probably go on to be poorer than her father, who's already poor indeed; that she'll probably have more health concerns than other little girls her age; that she probably won't get as much schooling as other children her age; that she'll probably be nutritionally deficient, unlike other children her age; that her father, trying to get a job without a home, will probably remain jobless; that their income will go down, not up, over time. That's their trajectory.

Ultimately, all of public policy comes down to a personal story. All public policy, all images of public policy come down to one picture. I want that those who are watching—and I hope my friends from across the aisle and around this place—will see the face of that little girl and that family, and her children and their children, who will be significantly worse off. I hope they see a direction we do not want to go. I hope they also understand that they have the power to change that direction.

I appeal that although this is the scaffolding, we need the building in this bill. Because it's not a bad thing—we'll probably vote for it—it's not a good thing either, because there's not one dollar, not one new unit, no new rent supplements and no inclusionary zoning, and those are four of the five requests from all of the housing activists. In fact, if you read it differently they're five of the five requests from all the housing providers and activists across Ontario.

There's still time to add that to this bill. There's still time to significantly amend this bill and put significant money behind new builds, infrastructure development and getting people off the streets in Ontario. There's still time. We've got, what, 12 weeks? You can do it. We can do it. We can do it together. We can provide those 2,000 new units of supportive housing a year. We can provide those 12,000 new units, inclusionary zoning units, a year without spending a tax dollar. We can build the 20,000 units every four years that this government initially promised; we can do that. We can provide rent geared to income; we can do that, too.

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We, finally, can actually begin to truly build the kind of Ontario that we would want our children and grand-

children to grow up in, the kind of Ontario that would never ever abandon that little girl and her father who had to sleep in an RV in our parking lot; that would never abandon an Edmund Yu, shot to death on a streetcar; that would never abandon the sole-income, single-parent families waiting for 12 years on affordable housing lists; that, finally, would never abandon our very own children and grandchildren, who will never be able to afford the middle-class dream of owning their own home.

This government has it within its power to do all of that. We all do. We all do if we work together. We all do if we significantly amend, if we put on the scaffolding of Bill 140 a structure that would actually provide—yes, new units; yes, new dollars; yes, new rent-geared-to-income supplements; and yes, inclusionary zoning.

I thank you very much. It was a pleasure and a privilege to start off the session. I hope it's one of co-operation, and I hope it's one of progress.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Having listened to the member for Parkdale–High Park, with many of her comments I couldn't agree more. The McGuinty government understands just how important an address is, a home is, to the lives of hard-working Ontarians.

I have seen with my own eyes, having visited some of the affordable housing units in my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville and those families, how it has transformed their lives. It has given them a sense of pride, a sense of hope and opportunity. It's that firm footing for that little girl or boy or husband or wife to know that they have an address, a home, that they open up at the end of a hard day when they come home. It gives them that grounding, that firm footing that all of us need.

The investments that the McGuinty government has made over the last seven and a half years—\$2.5 billion—with our partners, with the municipalities, with many not-for-profit agencies and organizations in our communities, have been remarkable.

I want to commend Minister Bartolucci and his predecessors for working together with the municipalities, with NGOs, so that we have a common vision—and we do have a common vision—for long-term affordable housing. This strategy speaks to what we heard from stakeholders: that we have to work together, that we have to make further progress.

It's unfortunate that the missing partner at the table is the federal government, which wishes not to participate when it comes to affordable housing. We have to speak all together with a strong voice and deliver the message that this is about Ontario's families, Canadian families, that need help, and in a time of need, we should all come together.

We are a compassionate government. The McGuinty government has a strong strategy that is delivering results for these families, and we are seeing that it improves the quality of life for all Ontarians in all our communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to provide a couple of minutes of comments to the very eloquent speech from the member from Parkdale–High Park. She speaks with a lot of passion and conviction, and I admire her for her hour leadoff as we kick off this session of the Legislative Assembly.

I have to admit that I am a bit skeptical of this government's commitment. I had a couple of housing issues in my riding of Leeds–Grenville, which is predominantly a rural riding. We applied for some housing funds. There were two projects. One was in north Grenville, which is an extremely fast-growing part of my riding. It was a project that the local hospital, the Kemptville District Hospital, was promoting. And there was a project in Brockville that the folks from Wall Street Village had tried to put forward that would provide some much-needed seniors' housing in Brockville.

Obviously, I couldn't ask a very technical question during question period to the minister, so I decided to put it in the form of an order paper question. I put five order paper questions, because we were trying to establish our strategy for approaching the government for some money. They were very specific questions, asking about the round 1 funding through the Canada-Ontario affordable housing agreement: "What's the initial allocation? Who got funding? Were any units turned back?" They were all very technical questions.

To my surprise, I got back two paragraphs which basically said that the province and the federal government, since June 2009, were in agreement; they both contributed \$622 million—blah, blah, blah. I was really disheartened that that's how the Ministry of Housing—the minister—chose to answer the question. If we're going to take 12 weeks and if we're going to co-operate on housing, we need a little bit of a better answer than what I got to my local questions over the last session.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I sat and listened intently because I'm seatmates with the member from Parkdale–High Park. I listened intently to every word she had to say.

What this is, and what she had to say for the hour, is a call. It is a call for all of us to do the right thing. It is a call for us to go beyond a technical bill, which this one is. It is a call for us to make those decisions which will help people in this province.

She talked about the wait-lists. Go to almost any place in your own community and look at the wait-lists and how long it takes for a family to get decent affordable housing. In some cases, the wait-lists are more than 20 years. Certainly, if you have a large family and you want to get into decent public housing and you put your name on the list, there is virtually no chance you will ever get that housing until your children have all grown up and moved away, and then you're not eligible for it anymore.

She talked about inclusionary zoning. This is an idea whose time has come. This is an idea that this government should embrace. This is an idea that municipality after municipality in Ontario is saying we need to do: "We want to do it. Give us the authority." They're not

even asking for money. And as the member from Parkdale–High Park so eloquently put it, this can be done without costing one single dollar of provincial money.

She talked again about the lack of housing being a key component of poverty. We know that people in this province are starting to get poorer, and there's starting to be some backlash. We know the human costs that are involved.

I thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for putting her words so eloquently before this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale.

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** I think it's always good when we struggle in this place to put a human face on issues that confront us, and I want to compliment all those members who tried to do that quite eloquently this morning.

The issue of housing, and social housing in particular, is not one that is new to us. I wrote my master's thesis many, many years ago on the issue of community participation in determining the kinds of social housing that might be built. That was at a time and a day and a place where the federal government, to their everlasting credit, through the Central Mortgage and Housing Corp. loan program, was providing low-interest and no-interest loans, in partnership with provincial governments and municipalities, to entice builders to come and build the kind of housing that would be made available to those on the margins, and it worked very, very well.

There were some significant changes that downloaded that—downloading seems to be a favourite exercise of governments, the senior one often inflicting on the next level of government obligations that they don't want to take onto themselves.

I was with Minister Bartolucci in Hamilton when this program was rolled out, and I just want to say for the record that I've never seen in my social service career the kind of enthusiasm amongst housing advocates for moving forward in hand-in-hand partnership to solve a problem which we all agree needs to be addressed than I did that day. Do you remember that, Minister? It was very—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments? The member from Parkdale has two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thanks to all the members for their comments.

A couple of items: I just want to set the record straight in response to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville about the McGuinty government record. Let's put it this way: Ontario has the worst record among all the provinces in affordable housing investments—the worst. This is based on Statistics Canada data. Ontario spends \$64 per capita on affordable housing—half the provincial average of \$115 per person. So Conservative, Liberal, NDP alike: We're the worst for investment in affordable housing. That's the simple and unadulterated truth. That's what this government has to own up to, and this technical bill does nothing to save that or change that in any way. So that's what we are asking for.

One of the members mentioned the delight with which this bill was received. I'm sure that among Liberal Party members it was received with delight, but certainly every single housing activist group we've spoken to, which is all of them, has said, "This is far from what we asked for." Why? Because there's not one new dollar, not one new unit, not one new rent-geared-to-income supplement and no inclusionary zoning. Those were the core of all of their asks; all of them ignored.

When you're dependent on government money, you might be nice at meetings, but the reality is, this is what they're saying in print in the media; this is their real reaction and with our—sorry—the worst provincial record for investing in social housing, I don't think there's anything to be proud about. What I'm suggesting is, since we've got the scaffolding of the bill, since it's going to committee, let's build on it. Let's add in the dollars, add in the units, add in the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I'm very excited that Nicolas Meilleur, a student at École Macdonald-Cartier, is going to be a legislative page. I know his parents are in the gallery, and they're very excited. So I would like to introduce Natalie and Jean-Roger and have them stand up. Welcome.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I want to take this opportunity to introduce two of the great employees of the MGS. I have the deputy minister and CEO of Service-Ontario, Bob Stark, and his new ADM of customer care, Helga Iliadis, who joined the Ontario public service on February 14, 2011. Welcome, and enjoy.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I'd like to introduce a young constituent from York South-Weston, Asquith Allen, who is here in the House today in the gallery to watch the proceedings.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to introduce my brother-in-law Peter Weltman, in the members' gallery today. He's the father of a great young page starting today, Benjamin Hillier-Weltman. Welcome.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am delighted to introduce a special constituent of mine. Richard Nancarrow is here with us today in the government gallery.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It truly is a proud occasion for me today to introduce my son Braden, who is a page for this term. He's not here yet, but he'll be coming back in.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, you have made an expensive mess out of

Ontario's hydro system, and you don't respect the fact that Ontario families are being stuck with your bills.

Since our last question period some 75 days ago, we have seen up to a billion dollars in subsidies to Quebec and New York to take our hydro while Ontario families are paying more, we saw an extraordinary Liberal backtrack on offshore wind and microFIT, and we're seeing massive cost overruns at your Big Becky tunnel project in Niagara.

Ontario families are looking for relief, but they're not getting it from the McGuinty government. Premier, how much more will hydro bills go up as a result of your expensive experiments?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, it's good to be back. I'm not sure the break has improved my honourable colleague's disposition, but I'm always pleased to take his questions.

The question obviously is about energy, and I can tell you that families are concerned about, I think, three things in particular when it comes to our energy plan. They want to make sure that they have a reliable supply of electricity, and we are on track to do that. They want to make sure that, while we ensure that we have a reliable supply of electricity, we are also creating more jobs, capitalizing on a new opportunity in the global economy—and we're creating thousands of those. At the same time, they're also very pleased with the fact that we are cleaning up our air, that we're shutting down our coal-fired generation. Those are all initiatives opposed by the party opposite.

They want clean electricity, they want clean energy jobs and they want reliable electricity. That's exactly what we're delivering.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, you used to claim that your expensive green energy experiments would only drive up bills by a meagre 1%, before you had to climb down and admit it was going to be 46%. We all know, Premier, that you're going to be lowballing that figure.

After seven years, Premier, you've become so out of touch that even when you retreat from your expensive energy experiments, Ontario families end up paying more. Take your recent backtracking on 1,000 microFIT projects that would pay 80 cents for five-cent power. Your ham-fisted bungling of this issue has now exposed Ontario families to expensive lawsuits.

Premier, why do you treat Ontario families like they're bottomless ATM machines? Why do they keep paying more and more for your bungling on the hydro file?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that Ontarians are becoming more and more interested in what it is that the party opposite has by way of specific proposals and plans, so I intend to take advantage during the coming session to help reveal some of those plans to assist Ontarians in their understanding of where it is that the party opposite, the official opposition, particularly plans to go.

To make it very clear, abundantly clear, we're against coal; they're for coal. We're for investing in solar, wind

and water power; they're against clean energy. We're for thousands of new clean energy jobs; they're against those new jobs. We're for attracting, so far, \$18 billion of new investment; they're against that new investment. So that sets up a pretty stark contrast of where they plan to go and where we plan to go. We're with families, clean energy, clean jobs, clean air.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The problem is, you just do not respect the fact that Ontario families get stuck with the bills for the expensive mess you've created in our hydro policy.

Let me give you one more example. The Big Becky tunnel project in Niagara is now five years late and \$600 million more expensive, and all the Premier has said about this latest Big Becky boondoggle is, "Well, these things happen." I guess that's no surprise from a Premier who gave us the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle; no surprise from a Premier who is subsidizing exports of power to Quebec and New York to the tune of a billion dollars as well.

Premier, don't you respect the fact that Ontario families get stuck paying the bills? How out of touch are you to say that another boondoggle just happens?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We're very proud of the work that is taking place as part of the Niagara tunnel project. It is a 10.2-kilometre tunnel that goes under the city of Niagara Falls. Working there is the biggest tunnel-boring machine in the world. It's going to supply clean power for the next 100 years. We're talking about a government with a bit of foresight, a bit of vision and a bit of courage to get that hard work done right now.

My honourable friends opposite think they can get all this work done and it won't add a single extra penny to our electricity bills. Ontarians don't believe that. That's magic. We have reality. We've got a sense of responsibility. We'll do the necessary to make sure we can turn the lights on, that the power's there, that it's clean power with clean jobs and that it delivers clean air to our families.

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: What we expect is for projects to be on time and on budget, and if they're not, for you to actually care about it. For you to dismiss a project that is now five years behind schedule and \$600 million over budget shows how dramatically out of touch you've become with the reality faced by Ontario families struggling with higher and higher hydro bills.

Each and every day, the Ontario PC caucus is actually talking to ordinary families, small business leaders, students and seniors concerned about your expensive experiments. We brought forward a moratorium on your expensive energy projects that would say: Let's hear from people about the health and environmental impacts, and let's make sure that when it comes to industrial wind

farms, they're in communities where they're welcomed and at prices that Ontario families can actually afford. You voted against it. Now you've flip-flopped. Were you playing politics then, or are you playing politics now?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think both my honourable colleague and myself have had the opportunity during the break to meet with a number of Ontarians to hear about their concerns, their aspirations and their issues, and a very important concern that remains very prominent in the minds of many Ontario families is jobs. Our electricity plan is about jobs: 225 jobs in Fort Erie at DMI Industries; 158 jobs in Burlington at Satcon producing solar modules; 150 jobs in Cambridge at ATS to produce solar modules; 100 jobs in Newmarket with SunEdison and Flextronics manufacturing solar modules; 300 jobs in Don Mills at Celestica manufacturing solar components. I can go on and on. But a very important benefit of our clean electricity plan is thousands of new jobs, which is exactly what Ontario families are demanding.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Some 300,000 lost manufacturing jobs, Premier, because of your high taxes, runaway spending and skyrocketing energy bills. You are so out of touch after seven years in office.

Premier, you just show no respect for the Ontario families that are getting stuck with your higher and higher bills. At one point, you were so determined to force your expensive industrial wind farm projects on communities that if an Ontario family objected in any way, you insulted them by saying they were NIMBYs.

You voted against the PC moratorium until we could assure that projects were affordable and in communities where they're welcome, based on good science, until you said, "The energy minister's seat is at risk"—until Liberal seats were at risk—and then you did a spectacular flip-flop on your hydro policy.

Premier, when your position keeps changing like this on hydro, how can anybody believe you, and why are they getting stuck with the bills for the expensive mess you've created?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's interesting to hear this. I think I'm detecting some kind of a covert flirtation with clean energy on the part of the Leader of the Opposition.

But I want to tell you a bit more about the specifics of their plan. They are in favour of burning coal in Ontario; we're against that. We're in favour of investing in clean energy; that's solar, wind and water power. They're against that. We're in favour of thousands of new clean energy jobs; they're against that. We're in favour of attracting up to \$18 billion in new investment; they're against that. It's important to understand the difference. We, in fact, represent the future. We understand an opportunity for a brand new industry. The centrepiece in North America will be located here in Ontario.

They're for coal. They're for dirty air. They're for the past. We're for going forward: clean air, clean energy, thousands of new jobs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, the reality is that you've changed and twisted your energy policies so much that delegates at a yoga convention would be envious. You've flip-flopped on your green projects and on the Oakville energy plant, and your ideological approach means that you're buying expensive power at 80 cents for power that should be five cents in the marketplace. Now you're ready to toss out the main pillars in your so-called green energy plan that you put in the window only because seats, like your energy minister's, are at risk.

Premier, you know the idea to jam the power plant to an unwilling host in Oakville is wrong, and now you're going to do the same thing in Cambridge with another secret sweetheart deal.

How much are Ontario families going to pay for your bungling? How much are Ontario families going to pay for your expensive mistakes? Premier, when will you get a clue and understand that it's families that are paying the bill for the disaster you've created on the energy file?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, just to be—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, just so it's perfectly clear, they're in favour of coal; we're against that. We believe in clean air for our families. They're against clean energy; we're in favour of harnessing the power of the sun and the wind. They're against the thousands of new jobs that we're creating; obviously, we are for those. They're against the new investments that we're attracting.

Here's an interesting quote from a recent Reuters publication from February 14 of this year. It says: "The outcome of an election this autumn in Ontario could stunt a budding renewable energy industry in the Canadian province just as it is becoming one of the world's hot investment destinations."

I would ask my friend, who maintains he's in favour of a strong economy, why is he standing up against an initiative that has been recognized globally as being at the forefront in terms of landing new investment, new jobs and cleaning up our air?

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. For the past two months, the Premier's been travelling around the province with his PowerPoint slides, explaining to families why they have to pay more and expect less. The Premier says that he just can't afford to make life more affordable for folks. If that's so, how can he afford \$2 billion in corporate tax giveaways every year?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I also say welcome back to my honourable colleague the leader of the NDP, and I welcome her questions.

What I would say to my honourable colleague is to understand that what, in fact, we've put in place is a comprehensive package of tax reforms. It results in tax

cuts for families of about \$12 billion over three years and of about \$4 billion or \$5 billion for businesses over the next three years. So I'd ask my honourable colleague to acknowledge what we are doing for families.

For example, the average Ontario family is receiving a \$355 income tax cut this year and every year going forward. There's also a new children's activity tax credit of \$50 per child, available this year and every year going forward. There also have been a number of transition benefits put in place, to assist with our transition as we adopt a modern taxation system that necessarily includes the HST. So I would ask my honourable colleague to acknowledge all those positive initiatives we've put in place to help our families.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The people I've been meeting with this winter might not be the same crowd that turns up for the Premier's PowerPoint presentation, but they do their jobs, they pay their taxes and they actually make our province work. They're telling me that they feel ignored. They're being told to pay more and more while their health care slips into crisis and their wages fall further and further behind.

Can the Premier explain how he's found the money for everything from CEO pay hikes to multi-billion dollar corporate tax giveaways while ignoring everyday people who are looking for a little bit of relief?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Obviously I take issue with my honourable colleague with respect to who it is that we are helping. I know my friend likes to describe Ontario as being divided up into different sections of people. We don't see Ontario that way. We see it as being in this together, and we've got a shared responsibility to move forward together.

Let me tell you about some of the things we've been doing. Full-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds: That's a \$1.5-billion initiative. It's benefiting 35,000 kids this year. It'll be 50,000 as of this September. It's going to grow to 247,000 in all 4,000 Ontario elementary schools. That is a very expensive initiative, but we're doing it because it's the right thing to do. That's not to any particular—four- and five-year-old kids don't vote, but we're benefiting them nonetheless because it's an important initiative. It speaks to their future, and that in turn speaks to our future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, while the Premier keeps talking at people, we have been listening, and here's what we're hearing: People's paycheques aren't stretching as far as they used to. They're being told they have to pay more for electricity—in fact, there was another announcement today about a rate hike by OPG—and more for home heating. The government's slapped them with a new unfair tax, but their health care is falling behind. In places like Windsor, it has actually become an official crisis.

The Premier has found billions and billions of dollars for corporate tax giveaways and CEO salary hikes, but

families want to know: When will they finally become the priority?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I say to my honourable colleague that we bring a balanced approach. We're taking a look at what we need to do to ensure that we grow this economy. That does call for, from time to time, providing additional supports to the business community; we understand that. But at the same time, we've not lost sight of the needs of our families.

I spoke a moment ago about full-day kindergarten and how that's saving the average family thousands of dollars in daycare costs every single year. We've also increased the minimum wage every year for six years. We've increased social assistance for our most vulnerable by 11% so far, raising the rates again last year. We have doubled student assistance. We've capped OSAP repayments at \$7,300. Our Second Career strategy, a very important investment, has helped 40,000 people so far. There's a new textbook and technology grant for our students of \$150 per student; I think it has helped some 220,000 students so far. Those are all initiatives to help our families.

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. Tomorrow, the Premier is going to be presenting his PowerPoint presentation to a very friendly audience that loves his corporate tax giveaways and secret private power deals, but if he actually left the conference hall to talk to the people in these communities, he'd hear stories like John's: "The HST is killing Ontario. I am laid off and find it almost impossible for me to drive to Windsor with the price of gas, just to hand out a few resumé's. Maybe Mr. McGuinty would like to trade places."

1050

Can the Premier explain to people like John why profitable corporations need a tax break, but they need to pay more?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Let me give you examples of some of the things we are doing. I know my honourable friend believes that we should never sit down and talk to the business community and, of course, I don't think that would be responsible. We worked with Dofasco; they're based in Hamilton. We announced a \$5.2-million loan to upgrade their steel production process and ensure the security of those jobs. We worked with AGS Automotive, and Tiercon, based in Stoney Creek; we provided them with \$6 million for the development of advanced bumper systems—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Hamilton East will please come to order, and Minister of Consumer Services. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We also have been working with Max Aicher North America; they're based in Hamilton. We provided a \$9-million loan to help reopen a former steel mill. That's about new jobs.

What my friends have got to understand at some point—hopefully sooner, rather than later—is that when we work with the business sector we can actually ensure that there are more jobs, which is exactly what our families are looking for. We believe in that kind of a partnership and we'll keep strengthening it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** If the Premier visited people as well as business groups, he would have heard stories like Laura's, a senior in London. She's been having a hard time paying her utility bills and writes this: "I have been living with Christmas lights instead of regular lights ... I wear heavy sweaters to keep warm."

Can the Premier explain to Laura how corporate tax cuts and CEO pay hikes will make her life better?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, my honourable colleague is trapped in this old construct, sadly, which speaks to where the NDP is today in Ontario. They believe you've got to be anti-business, without understanding that when they're anti-business, when they're anti-economic growth, they're anti-jobs. All the people that my honourable colleague speaks on behalf of—I can assure you, if we were to bring them together and ask them if jobs were important to them and their families, they would say, "Of course jobs are important to us." That's why we're going to continue to find ways to bring a balanced approach to governing.

We'll find a way to work with the business sector. We'll find a way to work with the social sector. We're continuing to invest in health care; we've got the shortest wait times now in Canada. We're going to continue to find ways to invest in our schools. Now our kids are in the top 10 globally when it comes to our standardized tests. The fact of the matter is that we're bringing a balanced approach and we'll continue to do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** After eight long years, it's clear that the Premier has lost touch with the people who elected him. Instead of putting them first and making life easier and more affordable, he slaps an unfair tax on their household budget while pumping billions of dollars into corporate tax giveaways. Instead of ensuring quality health care is there for them when they need it, seniors are being ordered to pay hundreds of dollars a day just to stay in the hospital and get care. Instead of doing his job in this Legislature, this Premier plans to spend the rest of the week hiding behind his PowerPoint presentation and hoping families forget his record of neglect. They won't. Why will families believe anything at all in the Premier's PowerPoint presentation when he has proven time and time again that he's just not on their side?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I don't share my honourable colleague's perspective, but I can say that I think we both equally prize health care for families in Ontario. We're both staunch believers in a public system. I'm proud of the progress that we have made. There's always more to be done.

When it comes to home care, for example, we've increased funding by 50%. There are now 182,000 more Ontarians who are being served. I think we all know that when our mum or dad can no longer make it on their own and need a bit of extra support so they can stay in their homes, we've got to be there as a society with those additional supports through home care services. We've got some in place—as I say, 182,000 more Ontarians are now accessing those additional services—but still there's more work to be done and we look forward to doing that.

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Premier. Ontario families are paying the price for a Premier who has grown out of touch after seven years in office. In your PowerPoint road show, you have been going around testing the patience of business audiences with an hour-long lecture. But what is worse is, when you get to the section of your lecture that deals with your microFIT scheme, you've been making the disrespectful statement that you are "rendering farmers' existence as farmers more viable."

Do you think Ontario farmers owe you their existence now that 1,000 of them have lost their life savings investing in your microFIT Ponzi scheme?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The honourable member will withdraw the comment he just made, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw. I'm not sure what it was.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Just an unequivocal withdrawal, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** It is a fine piece of irony that the PC Party would ask a question about efforts we're making to strengthen a clean energy program that's benefiting farmers, but it's a program that they want to kill. They don't support this program one bit. They want to do away with it. Their leader has said this much. Other members in their party have said this much.

We're standing up for Ontario farmers. We're making this program work. We're working with Hydro One. We're working with the OPA to ensure that farmers across this province can connect. The biggest threat to those farmers is those guys over there who want to kill their opportunity, who want to kill this microFIT program, who want to kill the thousands of clean energy jobs that were created. They should be standing up for Ontario farmers rather—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. Start the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Agriculture. The member from Oxford. The Minister of Economic Development.

Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's bad enough Premier McGuinty thinks Ontario farmers owe him their existence. It is outright disrespectful that you're going around saying this in a lecture to CivicAction Toronto at the exact same time that you sent out a thousand Dear John letters to Ontario—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The Minister of Research and Innovation will withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:**—letters to Ontario farmers who were lured into your get-rich pyramid scheme. Some of these farmers cashed in their RRSPs, others mortgaged their homes, and now they stand to lose it all.

You've taken away their livelihood, so why do you think they can afford to give you any more?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** These challenges are the result of the need to rebuild our transmission system. It is one of the challenges that we face to this day, and it's because of the ugly legacy that they left behind when it comes to our energy system. We've made some exceptional progress. We've upgraded over 5,000 kilometres of transmission.

Here is the irony of the PCs asking this question: As we've made these investments, they've opposed these investments every step of the way. Here's the irony of this: As we're working with Ontario farmers to give them a chance to participate in our clean energy economy, they've opposed the microFIT program every step of the way. You can't have it both ways.

We're looking forward to seeing your energy plan. But the fact is their energy plan would kill the microFIT program. No wonder the Leader of the Opposition wants to hide his energy plan from rural Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1100

### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The question is for the Premier. The McGuinty government's broken promise to redevelop Windsor's Grace Hospital site into a long-term-care home has forced the LHIN to declare a hospital bed shortage crisis in that community. Now seniors are threatened with \$600-a-day hospital bills if they refuse the first open bed in any nursing home. Why are seniors being punished for this government's health care failures?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you for the question. I want to start by saying that it is completely unacceptable that anyone be charged more than the copay rate—that's \$53.23—if they are in a hospital waiting for long-term care. I want you to know that my ministry and my officials are working with the LHIN, with the hospitals, to ensure that they understand the proper application of this policy and that other hospitals, in fact, across the province do understand that it is completely unacceptable to charge anything more than \$53.23 per day.

I do want to talk about long-term care in the Windsor area. We know that long-term care is very important. We are making investments. There is a new long-term care that is opening as we speak. There are now over 100 residents and more coming every day. There is another long-term—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Families want to be sure that their loved ones have the best possible care in the province. But not only are the services lacking; these families are being punished. In Windsor it's officially a crisis, but the story is playing out across the province of Ontario. An elderly patient in Toronto is being threatened with daily fees of \$1,800 to get out of the hospital.

Families are desperately trying to access the care they need, but they're finding a system in complete shambles. Instead of helping families, the government slaps them with exorbitant fees. Why are families being punished for this government's failures?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me repeat that it is completely inappropriate and unacceptable for any individual in this province in a hospital waiting for long-term care to be charged more than \$53.23 per day. I think the member opposite owes it to the people of this province to actually speak the facts in this House.

Having said that, we do acknowledge that there are challenges in our health sector. But we are making tremendous progress. We are committed to reducing our ALC rates in our hospitals by building stronger, better community supports. We now have almost 200,000 more people receiving home care supports than when we took office. We are moving forward. We are making progress. Is it perfect? No. But, boy, is it a whole lot better? Absolutely, yes.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Over the past week, my office has received a number of calls from farmers and individuals who have applied to the government's microFIT program, and many of them have received conditional offers of a contract from the Ontario Power Authority. Recently, some of these applicants received a letter informing them that their project is in a transmission- or distribution-constrained area and is currently unable to connect to the electricity grid. I am concerned for those applicants who

may have invested in equipment and are now receiving notice that their equipment cannot be connected.

Minister, what are you doing to ensure that the microFIT program remains viable and these applicants are able to integrate their projects into the grid?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to thank the member for the question.

Hydro One has undertaken the appropriate work to upgrade our transmission and distribution infrastructure to connect these microFIT projects as soon as possible.

The microFIT program has been a tremendous success. But one of the main challenges is that in 2003 we inherited a 1960s-era electricity grid, a grid that by all accounts was outdated, weak and unreliable. Continuing down the path of decay was simply unacceptable. Since then, we've invested over \$7 billion, strengthening our transmission system, and we've made significant progress. But there's still more work to do.

Getting these important projects online as soon as possible is a top priority for me and our government, and I've likewise made it a top priority for Hydro One. We're fully committed to supporting this program and growing our clean energy economy, creating thousands of jobs for Ontario families—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you, Minister. Obviously, the future of the microFIT program is vital to Ontario's clean economy, and I know that interest in participating in clean energy generation continues to grow. It was reassuring to know that the full resources of Hydro One and your ministry are being brought to bear on strengthening the electricity grid so that renewable energy can be integrated in a safe and reliable way.

There has been some talk in the media about the future of this program given some of the challenges that have arisen. Can the minister commit that the microFIT program will continue to provide farmers with the opportunity to generate clean electricity and support Ontario's clean energy economy for years to come?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Absolutely. Yes, I can tell the member that we will continue to support this important program that allows farmers to actively participate in our clean energy economy.

But I think it's important for the member and his constituents to know that the single biggest threat to the thousands of Ontario farmers participating in microFIT is without a doubt the Leader of the Opposition and the PC Party, who have indicated their intention to kill this program altogether. I expect this is one of the reasons the Leader of the Opposition doesn't want to talk about his energy plan in rural Ontario. But the fact is, the PCs have indicated they want to kill this program, hanging thousands of farmers out to dry and killing thousands of clean energy jobs across Ontario. It's no wonder he is afraid to talk about his energy plan in rural Ontario. So we're committed to strengthening the microFIT program and making it work for Ontario farmers. The PC Party is committed to killing it—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Premier. The way that Premier McGuinty is running his government does not show respect for Ontario families. Take the day you pulled the plug out from under 1,000 farmers who invested in your microFIT scheme that would make Bernie Madoff proud. It was a massive backtrack on your flagship policy. You were giving your hour-long lecture to CivicAction Toronto and you spoke to media afterwards. Why didn't you mention during that scrum a single word about the Dear John letters you had sent out to 1,000 Ontario farmers? Not a word, Premier. Why didn't you mention it?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, to the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think what the member should be doing is looking to his leader to say, "Why can't our party stand up for Ontario farmers like the government has been doing?"

We're very proud of this microFIT program and how thousands of farmers across this province are benefiting from it. What the member is not telling Ontario farmers is that he and his party don't support this program at all. His leader just last week said he would pull these advantages, these benefits from Ontario farmers.

It's very obvious why that party doesn't want to talk about their energy plan in rural Ontario. The reason they don't want to talk to farmers about their energy plan is that they're going to hang farmers out to dry when it comes to the microFIT program.

We're going to work with Hydro One. We're going to work with the OPA. We'll certainly deal with this transmission issue, and we're going to work with Ontario farmers to ensure they can be part of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You were no better the next morning, Premier, when you had a chance to say something to the media about your massive backtrack on Ontario farmers at your lecture road show in Oakville. Your team thought it was more important for the Minister of Finance to be out on a media conference taking a silly partisan shot at Ontario PCs than to say anything about your microFIT backtrack or, Premier, your massive backtrack on offshore wind. You waited until an international crisis in Egypt to issue an end-of-day press release on your offshore wind backtrack. How could you be so disrespectful as to use the crisis in Egypt to cover up your own backtracks?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment he just made.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Once again, it's totally ironic that the opposition who have opposed our efforts to get out of coal and build a cleaner, healthier future for Ontario are now the champion of offshore wind in the province of

Ontario. He opposes solar, he opposes bioenergy, he opposes onshore wind, and now he thinks we should be moving faster on offshore wind. Maybe he can explain to Ontario families why he would want to destroy our onshore wind projects, impacting farmers, killing jobs across this province, only to replace them with more costly offshore wind. This is yet another reason why the Leader of the Opposition is afraid to share his energy plan with Ontario families.

1110

Our clean energy economy is booming: 13,000 jobs created by the end of last year. We're on target to meet our 50,000-job target. We're moving full speed ahead and making Ontario a global clean-energy powerhouse. They have opposed—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.  
New question.

## NUCLEAR WASTE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier. Why is the government of Ontario allowing Bruce Power to transport used nuclear steam generators which are former Ontario property, which are 50 to 60 times more radioactive than international standards, across the Great Lakes without any kind of environmental assessment?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has indeed granted permission for Bruce to ship 16 decommissioned steam generators to Sweden for recycling. The member will know that this is a federal agency, and this is the responsibility that they've been charged with.

But I guess what I want to ask the member—I wrote to that commission to ensure that they're taking the needs of Ontario into full consideration. Did he write to them? He may have, but I'll ask him if he wrote to them to make sure the voice of Ontarians was heard. Or did his leader stand up and write to them? She may have. I don't know. She may well have, and if she did, that's good.

But we wanted to ensure that all safety and environmental concerns were being taken into consideration. I've been assured that they have. They've made their decision. They took deputations. They're the experts on these matters, and I would suggest that the member might want to respect that a little bit.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** This is this an astounding dereliction of duty. This is a minister who had the power to keep those radioactive steam generators in the hands of OPG. He didn't do that. In the end, it's on his hands, on his shoulders, on his head that this was allowed to go forward, and even now, not using the power of the Minister of Transportation to refuse transportation permits. The Minister of the Environment could demand an environmental assessment, not just the CNSC doing their little side show for this province.

The Quebec Minister of the Environment has publicly opposed the shipment. When will this government take

on its responsibility, stop passing the buck to the feds and act?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Unlike those guys, we're not all talk. I did write to the federal minister, and I did write to the CNSC to ensure that they're taking all the needs of Ontario into consideration.

But, again, this is another anti-nuclear rant from the NDP. That party opposes nuclear, they oppose natural gas, they oppose renewables now, they oppose hydro, and they oppose our efforts in investing in conservation.

If they ever come out with an energy plan, I can tell you it's going to have something very important that's going to be lacking in it, and that will be power. In fact, I would suggest that the slogan for the NDP energy plan should be "NDP: no darn power."

### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Madam Minister, as you know, I've been speaking many times about the diesel trains that are cutting straight through my riding and especially the proposed shuttle trains that will now go to the airport.

GO Transit is presently working on the largest infrastructure expansion project in this corridor, and you can imagine the complaints I've received from constituents who are living near the tracks about the dust and noise, and now they're concerned about the increased number of trains that will be running on the corridor.

For the past year, constituents have been waiting for the results of the Metrolinx electrification study, and I'm excited and delighted with their findings. Metrolinx now recommends that we move forward with electrifying both the Georgetown and the Lakeshore corridors.

Minister, since Metrolinx recommends electrification of both the Lakeshore and the Georgetown GO Transit rail corridors, why is the province—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to thank the member for Davenport and the member for York South-Weston for their advocacy on this issue from the beginning.

Electrification is a very important issue, and it's a multi-billion-dollar decision. We needed to make sure that we had all the information necessary to get it right, and that's why Metrolinx commissioned a study to look at the possibility of electrifying our entire GO network. The main findings of the study did, in fact, indicate that the highest transportation solution would be realized by electrifying the Lakeshore and the Georgetown South corridors, where the ridership is the highest.

Beginning the process with the air-rail link is the best first step, and we've given Metrolinx the go-ahead to begin the environmental assessment for the air-rail link. This is the first step towards that electrification of the entire system.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary. The member for York South-Weston.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Constituents in Davenport and my own constituents in York South-Weston are glad to know that the EA is moving forward.

I understand, however, that Metrolinx had a board meeting this past Friday where they approved the purchase of the vehicles for the air-rail link. Constituents in my riding of York South-Weston are very concerned that we are moving forward with the purchase of these vehicles when perhaps we don't really need to. They view that as a waste of taxpayers' dollars, especially considering that the province is funding the environmental assessment for the electrification of the air-rail link.

Can the minister explain why the government is moving forward with the purchase of these vehicles?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We are committed to having the air-rail link in place in time for the Pan Am Games in 2015. It's a very important part of our commitment on the Pan Am Games. And EAs take time; they're not something that we can rush. You have to go through the process.

As I've said many times in this House, the vehicles that are being purchased are convertible. They will use the highest and cleanest level of diesel, tier 4 diesel, and they will be able to be converted to electric trains when that corridor is completed.

The air-rail link will connect Pearson airport to Union Station. There's a need for this rail link if we're going to be an international city. We need to have this air-rail link in place. The cars are convertible, and I'm very happy to say that we're going to begin the EA on the air-rail link.

### CRIME PREVENTION

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, you showed just how out of touch you have become when you said that crime is not a priority for Ontario families. You said, "When I talk to Ontarians, their first concern is not keeping people in jail longer...." Tell that to Gravenhurst families who spent the weekend terrified about the escape of Ashley Crawford from Beaver Creek prison. Crawford murdered a woman by setting fire to her. Ontario families are breathing a sigh of relief that he was caught in Toronto today and will be back behind bars. Premier, why are you so disrespectful of Ontario families whose priority is to get tough on crime?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** It's exactly the opposite, of course, because if you look at the record of this government in terms of its investments to combat crime in the province of Ontario, you will find those investments are very extensive.

The member would know, for instance, that this government has put more than 2,000 additional police officers on Ontario streets; it has established—the first of its kind—a \$51-million guns and gangs strategy and it has invested over \$10 million annually in the highly

successful Toronto anti-violence intervention strategy and provincial anti-violence intervention.

Since 2003, we've been consistent. We have seen some declines as a result of the combination of working together. We're committed to getting tough on crime and have proven it with pieces of legislation that have come into this House and by the resources that we have provided to the policing community out there and the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** The Premier says, "Crime is actually going down," but tell that to the Scarborough families who saw one of their neighbours die in a home invasion where police later said the criminals had the wrong home. In Ontario, robberies and home invasions have gone up since Premier McGuinty took office. Cocaine production, trafficking and distribution are up. Trafficking in narcotics like crystal meth is up.

It used to be that Ontario families locked their doors when they left the house; now they lock the doors when they're inside the house. Is the only way Ontario families will see a change in their government's priorities to see a change in government in this province?

1120

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Were that to happen, I think the concern of the people of this province would be with the cut, cut, cut, slash-and-burn policies that are being advocated by the party opposite. Those who are concerned about crime in this province would be very apprehensive to have a party assume office that wants to reduce substantially the investments that are being made in the province of Ontario.

We have national forums, for instance, where we get together with other ministers. We have rallied those ministers to urge the federal government to live up to its commitment—and I know that my friend will want to join in this—on additional police to be provided for this province and others.

We have done a lot of things in this province to enhance the opportunity for people to fight crime—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## STEEL INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. For more than three months, over 900 workers have been locked out at their jobs at US Steel in Hamilton. Ontario workers are tired of seeing their livelihoods threatened by multinational companies that simply don't care. When will this government finally show a little bit of backbone and stand up for Ontario's workers?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Labour.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, if you will allow me, I would like to take the opportunity to extend my gratitude to the Premier for allowing me, with this opportunity, to represent the province, and all my colleagues on both sides of the House for their good wishes.

In regard to the member's question, it's incredibly difficult for the workers and their families during this time of extended lockout. I appreciate the concerns that are brought forward. It's never easy.

Our province has been proud of the fact that, over the last seven years, we have been able to enable—over 97% of the time, collective agreements have come to fruition and have settled. I do encourage both sides of the House to participate in the collective agreement. We will have mediators available from the ministry to facilitate, as we always have, and it's—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The lockout at US Steel in Hamilton and the attack on workers' pensions by US Steel is just the latest in a series of strong-arm tactics being used by US Steel to intimidate its workforce. And all of this from a company that accepted \$150 million from the Ontario government in 2006 and made employment commitments, in fact, to the federal government as well, that it admits it hasn't honoured.

Why won't this government say no to the bullying tactics of arrogant multinationals like US Steel and finally stand up for Ontario's workers?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We respect the collective bargaining process. We recognize the difficulties that have been undergone. We reject the approach of labour unrest, and we do our best to try to facilitate workers' rights, as well as that for collective agreements. It's with that in mind that we will continue to make our mediators available.

We recognize that in the years prior, there was tremendous unrest, and that has not been the case here; 97% to almost 99% of the time now, settlements have been resolved, and we will continue to try to facilitate that whenever possible.

## RETIREMENT HOMES

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the minister responsible for seniors. Minister, Bill 21, the Retirement Homes Act, passed in June. The government says this is an important piece of legislation that, for the first time in Ontario, provides strong protections for seniors. But, Minister, it's February and the province is still not regulating retirement homes in the province. In Willowdale, my constituents tell me they've heard that retirement homes will be regulated at some point, but they don't know when.

Minister, when will the act come into force? When are we getting on with it? Seniors and their families in Willowdale and in Ontario want to know.

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** Thank you to the member from Willowdale for this very important question. It gives me an opportunity to share with the House where we are in the process. For the first time in the province of Ontario, we will be providing strong protections for our seniors who live in retirement homes. In fact, we have about 700 retirement homes in the province of Ontario,

and there are about 40,000 seniors who live in these retirement homes.

Today is an important day in the process. Today the first set of proposed regulations for the Retirement Homes Act will be posted on our website for public comment, and that means for the next 45 days the public is asked to go on our website and comment on the proposed regulations. These proposed regulations were developed with extensive consultation with seniors' groups, the experts and industry partners.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** We all know that regulations are a key part of this act. People are going to carefully review them to make sure that they provide strong protections for retirement home seniors. The fundamental principle of the act goes to the heart of values that we in this Legislature all share. Seniors have a right to live in safety, security and autonomy. They have a right to make informed decisions about their own care.

Minister, can you give my constituents in Willowdale and the people of Ontario some details about how the regulations are going to work? How are they going to protect seniors in retirement homes? How will they implement the core principles of this act?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** Again, I would like to reiterate that these regulations are a key milestone to the Retirement Homes Act. They are an important part of our plan to provide strong protections for seniors who are living in retirement homes. The proposed regulations cover a range of very important areas, including care and safety standards, licensing and inspections, as well as enforcement, of retirement homes. There are also requirements for every regulated care service—that means from assistance with bathing to feeding to food preparation and storage of medication. There are also regulations that support the safety of residents, which include written policies promoting zero tolerance of abuse and neglect and requirements around trust accounts based on behalf of the residents.

Regulating retirement homes in the province of Ontario is the right thing to do, and we are on track.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is for the Attorney General. Minister, industry reports show that auto insurance fraud in Ontario costs \$1.3 billion a year. Media reports expose a growing problem with “target and bullet” schemes, where innocent drivers are targeted by insurance fraudsters. But the province has a catch-and-release policy when it comes to prosecutions of insurance fraud. In many cases, despite charges being laid, the fraudsters don't get to trial because of unreasonable delays. Minister, why is crime not a priority with your government?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Nothing could be further from the facts, as the comments and as the programs that my colleague the Minister of Community Safety outlined earlier clearly illustrate.

Fraud is a very big challenge, particularly in the auto industry—and I'm not sure why the party opposite didn't do anything about it while they were there for eight years.

We've taken a number of additional steps. We're working with the insurance agencies, working with crown prosecutors and the police to see what additional steps we can take to go after fraud within the industry. We have programs in place to make sure our prosecutions proceed as quickly as possible, unlike the party opposite. We are putting additional resources available to prosecute these and other crimes, unlike the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Premier McGuinty has admitted that crime is not a priority for him or your government. Last week in Brampton, he said that being tough on crime was no longer a priority for Ontario families.

Documented cases from the industry's own investigative branch show that charges are being laid. But that's only half of the equation. When these matters get to trial, they are not treated seriously. Cases are withdrawn, trials are stayed, and when a sentence is handed down, quite frankly, sentencing is a bit of a joke.

1130

Minister, why is your government's incompetence forcing Ontario families to pay more for auto insurance premiums?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Let's look at a few of the facts. The party opposite talks about crime and does nothing about it. They launch a program to invest in police officers that's time-limited; we have to pick it up, make it permanent and add 1,000 to it. They're all talk, no action.

They talk about delays in the courts. For every single year they were in power, the time it takes the average case went up. It's now going down. They had no plan, no say, no nothing.

They talk about being tough on crime. This Premier, this government, asked the federal government to end the two-for-one, three-for-one credit. They didn't do it. We asked the federal government; we got those changes. We asked for more mandatory minimums; we got those changes.

They're all talk, no action. If they've got a plan, let's see it, because we're still waiting.

#### DISCLOSURE OF TOXINS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, we learned last week through the Toronto Star that a number of people, and I would say in the thousands of people, were affected by Agent Orange that was dispersed by companies under direction from the Ministry of Natural Resources. How could it be in a modern democracy like ours that the public was not informed when it was found out that this Agent Orange led to cancer?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'm very glad to have the opportunity to address this issue, and I'm pleased that the member from Timmins-James Bay has asked the question.

I'm very concerned about this issue, and I can assure members that I'm committed to obtaining all the facts and sharing the information in an open and transparent fashion, and protecting public health.

Our government is taking steps to address the situation, and my office has taken a number of actions already. I brought the issue to the attention of the chief medical officer of health last week, who informed my office that there is no immediate public health risk.

I've asked the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to establish a dedicated phone line for anyone who may have questions. This line was operational as of last Friday. I've also instructed staff from all ministry districts to post information on MNR's website regarding herbicide use during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, as well as steps for former employees or employees of private forestry companies should they have any concerns and where they can take them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, the issue is this: In our democracy, in the 1970s, when the Ministry of Natural Resources learned that the toxic chemical they were using, Agent Orange, led to cancer, how could it be that the public was not informed? There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of people that were affected and never got treatment because they had no way of knowing that their exposure to Agent Orange led to the cancer they got. I've already started to receive the emails, as you have, because we're c.c.'d on them, in regard to families that have been affected.

My question to you is, how could it be that the Ministry of Natural Resources didn't make this information public as soon as they found out in the 1970s?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** As I stated earlier, I am very concerned about this issue, and I realize that it is certainly a worrying subject for many families in northern Ontario.

We can't change what happened 30 to 50 years ago, but I can assure you that our government is taking steps to ensure that the issue is addressed. Last week, I instructed my ministry to take immediate steps to gather as much information as possible on this herbicide. Unfortunately, much of this information predates our electronic records, so it may take a little time to assemble and evaluate paper records.

I can tell you that MNR stopped using this particular herbicide in 1979, six years before it was banned in 1985. I can assure you that this herbicide is no longer in current use in Ontario. While exposure to 2,4,5-T happened more than 30 years ago, people's health concerns need to be addressed right now.

I take this matter very seriously, and we're going to continue to collect information and make sure it's available to the public.

## PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Standing order 1(b)(iii) states that the purpose of the standing orders is to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a manner that respects the democratic rights of members "to hold the government accountable for its policies."

I call your attention to subsection 7(1) of the Executive Council Act, which states: "Every minister of the crown is required to attend in the chamber during the period set aside for oral questions on at least two thirds of the days on which the House holds routine proceedings."

This morning, media reported Premier McGuinty no longer feels the need to show up for work. He will be in contravention of a lawful order of this House and will prevent the opposition from holding the government accountable for its policies. This contravention is especially grievous as this is the last session of the House and the last question periods before the dissolution of Parliament and the next general election.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to point out to the House that we passed the law—we passed the law—requiring ministers to be in question period at least two thirds of the time. We did this because the Conservative government didn't show up. We would like to point out that in the spring of 2003, Premier Ernie Eves only showed up for 33% of question period, and in the last session of the Legislature, Premier Mike Harris only showed up for 34% of that time. We now publish attendance records, and every minister in this government has attended at least two thirds of question periods to date.

I believe that this is not a point of order, and I believe that we shouldn't even be discussing this at this time.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. The New Democrats find it regrettable that a legitimate concern raised by the official opposition House leader is reduced to partisan bickering by the government in their response.

The next few months are going to be precious months here in the chamber. It's going to be scarce time before a provincial election. With respect, it's my submission on behalf of New Democrats to you that the Speaker should call upon the government to abide not only with the letter of the law but with the clear spirit of the law and that scofflaw ministers, including a Premier who would rather do election campaigning across the province than attend question period, should be reined in.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just want to thank the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, the government House leader and the member from Welland for their comments relating to the point of order that was raised.

Particularly, the member referenced section 1(b) of the standing orders and 7(1) of the Executive Council Act. It is for me to inform the House, as Speaker, that the Speaker does not have the authority to enforce the Executive Council Act. That authority is not vested within the

Speaker. I would also remind the honourable member that there is nothing contained within our standing orders that compels a member to attend this House.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1138 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Good afternoon to everyone. As part of Black History Month, I would like to introduce the following guests—they're not in here, but they're in the Legislature today for an event being held by the Canadian Black Caucus. They are students from Westview collegiate, Cedarbrae Collegiate, Pierre Laporte Middle School, Kane Middle School, Glen Ames middle school, Silver Springs Public School, Georges Vanier Secondary School, Fairbank Middle School, Rockcliffe Middle School and Clinton public school.

I would also like to introduce the president of the Canadian Black Caucus, Ms. Gwyn Chapman, along with the sponsors and presenters who are here with us today.

Also, I take this opportunity to introduce and acknowledge some other guests who are joining us in the Legislature this afternoon, including Ms. Ida Fogo and her son Mr. Brian Fogo, and members of the Black Creek communities of Jane and Finch, represented by my colleague Mario Sergio.

I'm really pleased to acknowledge all who are here today, and I look forward to seeing them in the Legislature again.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** This morning, Ontario's grain and oilseed farmers held a breakfast here at Queen's Park to deliver a message: They need a permanent business risk management program.

This program was introduced as a pilot for three years, and it worked. Farmers demonstrated their support for the program by participating even when prices were good to ensure that the program would be there when they needed it.

Now the McGuinty government claims they can't continue the program without federal assistance. They said the same thing last year, then extended the program halfway through the summer.

Today we are in the same position as we were a year ago. Once again, our grain and oilseed farmers are being asked to plant without knowing whether there's a program to count on.

They asked for a program that was predictable and bankable; if they are forced to beg the government each

year for an extension, it isn't either. Bankers won't approve an operating line of credit based on the hope that the government will be forced to do the right thing.

We believe that the grain and oilseed business risk management program should be made permanent so our farmers can depend on it. Tim Hudak has committed that, if elected, a PC government would work with Ontario farm leaders to develop a risk management program based on the cost of production for all sectors.

Farmers have consistently told the government that a made-in-Ontario business risk management program can succeed. The Ontario government needs to show leadership and do what is right for Ontario farmers.

## KINDNESS WEEK

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to welcome everybody back to the Legislature for the 2011 edition of Queen's Park.

I again rise to recognize Kindness Week in Ontario. As you may recall, this Legislature unanimously passed a motion recognizing Family Day week as Kindness Week in Ontario, an initiative that was started in Ottawa through the leadership of Ottawa's very own Rabbi Reuven Bulka, a great friend who started this campaign to just remind people that we should be kind to each other. We are often taught that we have to be kind to our family and friends, but I think it's our civic duty that we be kind to strangers as well, and this week just makes it easier to do those random acts of kindness.

Today I was pleased to join MPP Elizabeth Witmer from Kitchener–Waterloo and MPP France Gélinas from Nickel Belt to give out Kindness Week kits to all the members, the media, staff and the friends who are visiting Queen's Park. Those kindness kits included the cookies which a lot of you enjoyed. I want to thank Tim Hortons for sponsoring and providing those cookies, as well. It's just another simple way of reminding you to offer kindness to others.

Also, thanks to your support, Speaker, we're doing a book drive at Queen's Park during this week. Books collected in your office will be donated to the Ontario Literacy Coalition. I encourage all members and staff: If you have any extra books, please bring them to the Speaker's office and donate for families who need books.

## COYOTES

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** They resemble small wolves but are stronger than the average-sized dog. They are cunning and stealthy, and they roam and hunt mainly at night. To some people they are cute and playful animals, but in rural Ontario they are nothing but trouble.

I have hundreds of signed petitions, some from farmers who have first-hand experience with coyote attacks and others who have lost pets and feel under threat by this brazen animal. Sheep farmers, cattle farmers: All of them are losing animals and hundreds, if not thousands, of income dollars due to the kills. As

many as 6,000 lambs and sheep alone are killed by coyotes on Ontario farms every year, according to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Obviously, we in rural Ontario are in a crisis.

I'm proposing a province-wide coyote bounty. Furthermore, I'm also proposing that the province allow counties to implement their own proof-of-kill collection system. County offices should be coordinating verification and will have to properly dispose of the evidence.

This is right now the only solution for the predator crisis because whatever else has been done up until now has failed. The coyote problem has only gotten uglier. Farmers themselves have tried numerous other methods of getting rid of the coyotes. The bureaucrats have tried their own eradication policies with trapping and hunting but to no avail.

My biggest concern now is that a coyote will start targeting small children because its food supply—namely rodents, rabbits and groundhogs—is running dry.

My bounty proposal has the support of farmers and farmer groups such as Middlesex southwestern sheep producers and municipalities such as Kincardine and Chatsworth.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Today I rise to commemorate Black History Month. Every year during the month of February we celebrate the achievements of Canadians of African descent and the contributions they have made towards building a stronger, more united Canada.

Black History Month began in the United States in 1926 as Negro History Week. Its initial purpose was to raise awareness of the African experience and to educate people about the rich culture and diversity of the African diaspora.

The advent of black emancipation in the United States helped Canadian Afrocentric organizations to champion the importance of the history of the black community.

Through the efforts of organizations such as the Ontario Black History Society and the Canadian Negro Women's Association, Toronto became the first municipality in our country to celebrate Black History Month in February 1979.

In 1995, the member of Parliament for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Dr. Jean Augustine, introduced a motion in the House of Commons to declare February Black History Month. It was passed unanimously by the House on December 5, 1995, and the first Canadian declaration of Black History Month began in February 1996.

Please join me in welcoming our distinguished guests from the African-Canadian community who are here today. Some are in the Legislature; some are in some of the other rooms. We're all here together to celebrate the political, social and economic contributions that all Canadians of African descent have made towards the betterment of our province and of our country.

### PEYTON AND TAYLOR HORNING

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's a pleasure to rise today to recognize two incredible girls from the village of Merrickville in my riding of Leeds-Grenville. Twelve-year-old Taylor Horning and her 10-year-old sister Peyton are proof that you can make a difference in this world at any age.

The girls were devastated last year when they saw images of the environmental damage caused by the oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico. What happened to the wildlife on the US gulf coast stirred something inside of them. Although it happened far from home, they felt compelled to do what they could to help.

So while many other kids relaxed during the summer, Taylor and Peyton worked tirelessly on their mission. They collected hair and fur from 26 hair salons and pet groomers in three cities. I'm proud to say that the girls collected an amazing 1,000 pounds of hair and fur that were made into hair booms used to soak up the oil.

Taylor and Peyton have set a fine example to others their age that if children have a commitment and dedication, they can get things done. But I'm not the only politician who's taking notice of these outstanding young agents of environmental change. Just prior to Christmas, the girls were delighted to receive a presidential environmental youth award from US President Obama.

I'm sure everyone in this House will join me today in applauding Taylor and Peyton Horning. Girls, I can't wait to see what you do next.

1510

### THREE KINGS DAY

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** It is with pride that I congratulate hard-working and dedicated constituents like Henry Samuel from my riding of York West. For the past six years, the United Dominican Canadian Cultural Club and its president, Mr. Henry Samuel, have been reaching out to the youth in our community by organizing the Three Kings event held at our own York Woods Theatre every January 6.

According to tradition, the three wise men brought gifts to baby Jesus on January 6. Many Latin American countries continue to celebrate this offering by leaving gifts under their children's beds on the night of January 5 for them to discover on the following morning.

The United Dominican Canadian Cultural Club has been fundamental in keeping this tradition alive in our community with the annual Three Kings event, spending months preparing and collecting donations from all over the city for this one very special celebration.

Some 500 kids attended the Three Kings event, where each child receives a toy and is delighted by clowns and a guest appearance from the three wise men, as well as from their favourite cartoon characters.

I would like to thank Henry Samuel and the United Dominican Canadian Cultural Club for their relentless dedication and generosity to children, their good citizen-

ship and their leadership throughout our York West community.

### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Recently, Cliffs Natural Resources, the mining company interested in developing the chromite deposits in the Ring of Fire region 500 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, released their study dealing with some of the mining issues, the transportation issues and the smelter refinery issues. What got people's attention was Cliffs's opinion that a smelter refinery located in Ontario would be unlikely because Ontario's hydro electricity rates are too high. Since then, the McGuinty Liberals have issued press release after press release in an attempt to discredit Cliffs Natural Resources' comments.

Here is the history: Last year, Xstrata closed their copper refinery in Timmins. They're going to continue to take the ore out of the ground in Timmins, but now they're going to ship it to Quebec to have it smelted there, and about 2,000 good jobs are going to follow. Why did they do that? Because they're paying \$70 million a year for electricity in Ontario and they can pay only \$35 million in Quebec.

Four and a half years ago, what was then Inco closed their copper refinery in Sudbury. Today, they still take the ore out of the ground in Sudbury, but they ship it to Quebec to smelt it there at half the cost. That's exactly what is happening with Cliffs Natural Resources. If they move to Manitoba or Quebec, they'll pay half the cost of refining the metal.

There's a real problem, a real issue, with hydro rates in Ontario.

### JANE STREET HUB

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I am pleased to rise in the House today and share that the Jane Street Hub in York-South Weston officially opened its doors last January 20. Located at Jane and Trethewey, the Jane Street Hub is a one-stop centre for health and social services, with six different agencies operating and partnering under one roof. The community was especially pleased to have Minister Matthews there for the celebration, participating in opening day events, including joining a drumming class for a little performance.

The hub is home to Unison Health and Community Services, COSTI, Macaulay Child Development Centre, Midaynta Community Services, North York Community House and Yorktown family centre.

Funded by the provincial government and the United Way, the hub is one of eight similar centres serving Toronto's high-priority neighbourhoods. A tremendous necessity in York South-Weston, the Jane Street Hub will play a vital role in increasing access to much-needed services, and joins recent health care investments in the riding of York South-Weston by the provincial government, including a new MRI at the Humber River Regional Hospital, two new family health teams and a new

nurse practitioner-led clinic set to open at Keele and Eglinton. These new services are all widely welcomed by our community.

### CAROLYN BROWN AND DAVID NEWPORT

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'm honoured to rise today to speak about two distinguished members of the medical community in Peterborough. Dr. Carolyn Brown and Dr. David Newport were honoured on December 1, 2010, at an event hosted by the Patients Association of Canada and the Ontario Medical Association as winners of the Patients' Choice Awards.

Dr. Brown and Dr. Newport are members of the Peterborough Clinic family health team and were nominated for this award by their patients. The patients of these two doctors wanted to acknowledge in a public way how much they appreciate the good care they received when under their care.

The Patients' Choice Award is a patient-led celebration that recognizes a positive impact that a doctor has in the lives of their patients.

The president of the OMA, Dr. Mark MacLeod, said: "On behalf of Ontario's doctors, I want to congratulate Drs. Brown and Newport on being chosen to receive this award.... We hope more patients will come forward and share the positive impact their doctors have had on their experience in the health care system."

It's a pleasure to recognize Dr. Carolyn Brown and Dr. David Newport for winning the Patients' Choice Award. They are to be commended for their commitment to their patients and the health care profession.

### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Timmins-James Bay has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer given to his question by the Minister of Natural Resources concerning Agent Orange. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Murdoch assumes ballot item number 68 and Mr. Hudak assumes ballot item number 77.

### TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment, the following reports were tabled: on December 23, 2010, the 2009 annual report entitled Public Health: Everyone's Business, from the chief medical officer of health; and on December 21,

2010, from the Ombudsman, a special report entitled Investigation into the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Monitoring of Long-Term-Care Homes.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL À LA COMMISSION DE TRANSPORT DE TORONTO

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission / Projet de loi 150, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail à la Commission de transport de Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On division.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Carried on division.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'll make my statement during ministerial statements.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 64 be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members have heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding committee membership.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that the following changes be made to the membership of the following

committees: on the Standing Committee on Estimates, Mr. Fonseca replaces Mr. Brownell; on the Standing Committee on General Government, Mr. Brownell replaces Ms. Jaczek; and on the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, Ms. Jaczek replaces Mr. Sousa.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members have heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I rise in the House to propose legislation that is being introduced to address the unique and specific transit needs of the city of Toronto. As members of this House know, on December 16, 2010, Toronto city council made a request during a motion, asking that the province designate public transit in Toronto an essential service.

Our government respects the right of the city council of Toronto to speak for the people of that city. Our response to the city of Toronto's request takes into consideration the city's concern regarding the unique circumstances of Toronto and its transit system. These circumstances include the critical role the TTC plays in the life of the city of Toronto and, indeed, in ensuring the health and safety of its people.

**1520**

This bill, the Toronto Transit Commission Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2011, would prohibit strikes and lockouts at the TTC. As a general matter, Ontario's Labour Relations Act would continue to apply to labour relations between these parties. However, in cases where the parties reach an impasse in collective bargaining, outstanding issues would be resolved through a fair and neutral third-party process: binding-interest arbitration.

This proposed legislation addresses a truly unique circumstance. Toronto is Ontario's and Canada's largest city. The TTC is also this country's largest transit system.

Every business day, approximately 1.5 million people ride on and rely on the TTC. There's the health care worker who rides the system to get to their job at a hospital or nursing home. There are the students and teachers who take it to school. There are the parents who rely on the TTC to get to work and provide for their kids. There are those, including many elderly Torontonians, who don't have cars and take the TTC to medical appointments. There are the young people who use the TTC for a safe ride home. Tourists who visit our attractions depend on public transit. There are thousands of riders who can't afford the time and money to drive and park downtown, if that parking is even available during a TTC work stoppage.

We know that the fewer the number of cars on our roads, the better it is for our environment and our air quality. The TTC helps keep cars off the road and reduces air pollution that our children and elderly breathe. We've seen the packed roads and the major disruptions caused in Toronto when it has been brought to a near standstill by TTC work stoppages.

The city of Toronto has the largest concentration of hospitals, nursing homes and health care facilities in the province. There are 40 hospitals, 84 long-term-care homes and 21 community care centres in the greater Toronto area, as well as many retirement homes. Many of those who staff these facilities get to work every day by public transit.

It is clear that, for the city of Toronto, any loss of public transit, relied upon by 1.5 million on a normal business day, is much more than just an inconvenience. To get an idea of the scale of TTC's operations, on the average business day, it moves the same number of people that live in Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Sudbury and Windsor combined. When we think of the number of people affected by TTC work stoppages, we can also understand the city of Toronto's concern about the economic impact work stoppages have.

We know from past experience that work disruptions on the TTC severely affect the city's economy, and we know the importance Toronto has in the province's economy. Work stoppages at the TTC, according to a city of Toronto staff report issued in 2008, have an estimated economic impact of \$50 million every workday. The impact of TTC service disruptions would send economic and environmental shockwaves across this province.

Five times since 1974, the provincial government has enacted legislation to end or prevent a TTC work stoppage, most recently in April 2008. That legislation testifies to the vital, unique and critical role the TTC plays in the lives of Torontonians.

Our government firmly believes in the right of collective bargaining and that the best collective agreements are those reached at the bargaining table. This proposed legislation would not take away or limit the right to bargain, and even when bargaining reaches difficult stages, our professional mediators are available to assist the parties to reach an agreement. This bill would only prohibit strikes and lockouts. This bill would provide a fair and neutral means to resolve bargaining impasses—binding arbitration—the same basic means of resolving impasses used by our police, firefighters and hospital workers.

The people of the city of Toronto are in the best position to determine how vital the TTC is to their lives. Their elected representatives have made this request to the province. We have carefully considered the request and consulted with the city, the TTC and its bargaining agents, and after carefully reviewing the request, the reasons for it and the reality of the circumstances, we are responding in a way that is fair and measured.

This is not about taking sides. It is about acting in response to the city of Toronto's request. It is about

looking out for the people of Toronto, and that includes looking out for their health and safety. It's about listening to the people of Toronto and their concern about the ability of their city to function effectively if they are left without their transit system.

It's only fair and reasonable that the TTC and its unions know the rules that will apply in setting these agreements if they reach an impasse in bargaining. With our proposed legislation, the parties would have a stable means of settling unresolved collective bargaining issues and the public would benefit from uninterrupted access to vital TTC services.

With this bill, this Legislature would no longer have to resort to ad hoc back-to-work legislation in order to resolve TTC labour disputes while the people of Ontario's largest city are left stranded without their transit system. Fostering stable labour relations and uninterrupted provisions of services by the TTC reinforces our government's key priorities of public health, the environment and green economic growth.

A report prepared by the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 113, in 2008, estimated that without TTC services, there would be over 178,000 additional cars on the road in Toronto and about 350,000 new car trips on any business day. That's a lot of added pollution. That is an impact the people of Toronto can understandably ask to be protected from.

The city of Toronto motion requesting this legislation asked as well that a mandatory review of the legislation take place after five years. They've requested it, so our bill calls for such a review to take place within one year of the fifth anniversary of its coming into force.

Again, this legislation comes in response to the city council of Toronto motion to prohibit strikes and lockouts at the TTC. We have carefully considered their request. We have consulted with the city, the TTC and its unions, and we have listened to the people of Ontario's largest city say that they need the largest transit system in Ontario to function without interruption. We have listened and we have acted responsibly in introducing this bill.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Today I am pleased to rise in the Ontario Legislature as a proud Canadian and as a person of African descent on this first day of the spring session in the month of February, Black History Month.

I extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guests, friends and the young people who have joined us in the Legislature today. Indeed, it is a great honour for me to address the Ontario Legislature in this regard for the third consecutive year.

I am particularly pleased to speak on Black History Month in this year 2011, the year which has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year for People of African Descent. This designation aims to strengthen the economic, cultural, social, civil and political rights of people of African heritage; to increase

our participation and integration in all aspects of the social fabric of our society; and to promote a greater knowledge of and respect for our diverse heritage and culture.

This year is an important milestone for this annual recognition of black history and culture; 2011 also marks the 15th anniversary of the national declaration of Black History Month in Canada. It is certainly apropos at this time to recognize the Honourable Jean Augustine, the first black woman elected to the Parliament of Canada, who built on the legacy of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, also known as the father of black history. Dr. Augustine introduced a motion in the House of Commons officially recognizing February as Black History Month in Canada.

1530

I congratulate the many organizations, including the Ontario Black History Society and its president, Mrs. Rosemary Sadlier, for their work in keeping alive the history, the struggle, the successes and the culture of a people: people of African descent.

The month of February is not only Black History Month; it is also Heart Month. Accordingly, I take this opportunity to call attention to the fact that people of African descent are at high risk for heart disease. Risk factors include unhealthy weight, obesity, physical inactivity and smoking. In this Black History Month, I call upon persons of African descent to make important lifestyle changes to reduce their risk of heart disease by engaging in physical activities, eating healthy foods and living a smoke-free life.

Each and every one of us has a role to play in how we are remembered on the pages of history, and of course, African Canadians have a proud history. We contributed to building a stronger, healthier and more prosperous province for all Ontarians. While history most often recognizes the great successes among us, African-Canadian builders are everyday people: the volunteers, the teachers, the parents, the young people, elders and men and women who are the fabric of Canadian society; individuals who are the very cornerstone of our society; individuals whose contributions to our society are numerous; individuals whose names are not written on the pages of history, but indeed, these individuals are certainly building blocks in the foundation of our great province. These are the individuals on whose shoulders we stand, people like me and others: the role models who have moved us, moulded us, sacrificed for us and indeed, the individuals who shaped our history and changed our world.

In celebrating our past, let us not forget the battles we have fought seeking peace and harmony for ourselves and our children. Of course, we know our children are indeed our future, and today I had the opportunity to address students visiting the Ontario Legislature. Again, I take this opportunity to welcome them here. This is a very diverse group of students, I might add, standing together today in this Legislature in recognition of Black History Month.

I certainly look forward to a future that embodies a society where opportunity and equality for all exists for

everyone. In the words of one of the greatest black leaders of all time, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice."

I am indeed pleased to stand in this Ontario Legislature as a member of the African-Canadian community, but also as an Ontarian, a Canadian and a member of one race, the human race, as I ask all members of the Ontario Legislature to join me in recognizing February as Black History Month and 2011 as the Year for People of African Descent. Together we can work towards the day when African Canadians will stand side by side as elected members of this Legislature and elsewhere in every sector of our society.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Statements by ministries? Responses.

#### TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to thank the new Minister of Labour for bringing forward this legislation. However, as we have seen time and time again, this Liberal government has shown a disregard for the parliamentary process. Once again, opposition parties were not given a copy of this bill until just a few short minutes ago.

If the media is to be believed, the government would like to pass this bill quickly. If that is indeed the case, I think it would behoove them to abide by our long-standing parliamentary traditions and inform the opposition parties of forthcoming legislation. However, this new minister appears to be following in his predecessor's footsteps.

It is important that the Legislature respect the request from the mayor of Toronto that the TTC be designated as an essential service. The people of Toronto depend on the TTC to get to and from work every single day, to make a living for themselves and their families. This was a platform issue for the mayor in the recent election, and clearly, it resonated with the people of Toronto. Thus, it is our responsibility to respect the mandate that he was given.

When the member for Don Valley East brought forward his private member's bill on this same issue last year, the PC caucus supported it on second reading because we believed that it was a debate worth having. This is further underscored by Mayor Rob Ford's request that this Legislature examine the issue.

For seven years, this government has demonstrated that it will take the side of organized labour and union influence over and above the desires of regular hard-working families in the province of Ontario. However, once again, they are backtracking and proving their lack of conviction, this time showing that not even their friends in organized labour can trust them.

The Minister of Finance pledged to freeze the wages of unionized government workers, but that promise was broken. The previous Minister of Labour ignored this issue, despite a disruptive and expensive strike in 2008. It is appalling that this Legislature has ignored such an

important issue for the last seven years. Rather than examining this issue, the Premier has focused priorities on issues such as banning plastic bags and chocolate milk.

I'm looking forward, and the PC caucus is looking forward, to examining this bill and participating in a full debate in this House on the merits of this legislation.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Why do we recognize February as Black History Month? I want to quote Dr. Rosemary Sadlier, president of the Ontario Black History Society, who has an eloquent reply. "African-Canadian students need to feel affirmed; need to be aware of the contributions made by other Blacks in Canada; need to have role models; need to understand the social forces which have shaped and influenced their community and their identities as a means of feeling connected to the educational experience and their life experience in various regions in Canada."

I absolutely agree that role models and mentoring generally contribute to healthy and cohesive communities. Role models help students feel connected to their communities, and in the case of African-Canadian students, they will find role models throughout our history and in places throughout Ontario and Canada.

In Glen Allan, in Wellington county, the Queen's Bush settlement was once home to 2,000 black settlers in the 1800s. That's where, along with the Honourable Lincoln Alexander, I attended an Ontario Heritage Trust ceremony in the summer of 2008. A man approached me that day: August 1, he told me, should be recognized as Emancipation Day in Ontario, an idea long championed by Rosemary Sadlier and the Ontario Black History Society. I agree.

I then approached the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, and we agreed to co-sponsor a bill to proclaim Emancipation Day. I then went to work lobbying the Premier and other members of cabinet. This was the first bill ever presented in the House by two MPPs from different political parties sponsored jointly. Thanks to the Legislature, one of the most significant milestones of black history in the British Empire is now enshrined in law.

So we find good reason to celebrate February as Black History Month. It's a chance for all of us to join African Canadians in celebrating their valued contributions throughout our nation's history. Some of those contributions were highlighted in a recent editorial in the Georgetown Independent and Free Press, and I urge all members to read it. On CBC Radio, Diana Braithwaite has done a fabulous job this month of highlighting many more stories of Ontario black history. And of course, Rosemary Sadlier and the Ontario Black History Society continue to do their outstanding work.

On behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, and the entire Ontario PC caucus, please accept our warmest congratulations for another successful Black History Month.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure as leader of Ontario's New Democrats to speak to the minister's statement on Black History Month. New Democrats, of course, join in the celebration of Black History Month. This is a month in which we acknowledge the rich history and traditions of the African-Canadian community. We recognize the many varied contributions that the African-Canadian community has made and continues to make to enrich the social, the cultural and the political life of Ontario.

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This is a celebration that has a long history in our province. It grew out of Negro History Week, established in 1926 in the United States by Carter G. Woodson, a black educator and publisher from Virginia. The month of February was initially chosen because it contains the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

Black History Month allows African Canadians, particularly African-Canadian youth, to have an opportunity to affirm and celebrate their roots and history in North America, but to do that specifically with pride: to celebrate heroes, certainly, and role models and understand the social and political forces that have shaped their community. I too want to celebrate the fact that young people came to this Legislature today for Black History Month. I unfortunately didn't get a chance to pop in, but I know that they were up in room 228 doing some very positive work today, and I think that's a very important piece of today's celebration.

It's also an opportunity, though, for the larger community to learn of the history and contributions made by blacks to Canada and to Canadian history and to how our community itself, as a result, has evolved. It's a rich history that stretches back to long before Confederation, to the earliest days of colonists on this continent, and it deserves, definitely, celebration, but also commemoration.

But while we do that, while we celebrate, we must also use this month to take stock of where we actually are today. No person of good faith would argue that we don't still see ongoing issues of racism and injustice in education and employment; in terms of the justice system already and the unfair treatment of black men in particular in that system. It's a real, serious problem that we still have to grapple with here in this province. Although Black History Month is an opportunity to celebrate the victories and the distance that we've come, I think it's a lost opportunity if we don't acknowledge the racism that continues to exist in our society.

So we still, unfortunately, have some distance to travel on the road to true freedom and true equality in Ontario. It's incumbent upon us, therefore, at this point in time, during Black History Month, to rededicate ourselves to moving Ontario to that destination where there is equality, where there is freedom, where there is opportunity and justice for African Canadians. We don't have that right now, and we need to get there. In our cele-

bration, let's also remember that we need to reach that destination.

I just want to end by saying that we certainly do value the sacrifices made by all kinds of untold women and men over the years, over the decades, who gave us so much and who gave so much for their families, for their communities and ultimately to all of us. Thank you.

## TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The most fundamental right in any free and democratic society is the right of a working woman or man to withdraw their labour. If they don't have that right, they are no longer free and they no longer live in a democracy. That's why New Democrats will not be party to this apparent joint action between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party to prohibit TTC workers their right to withdraw their labour in the course of a dispute, in the course of contract negotiations.

Since the 1940s and 1950s and Justice Rand and his report, there's been a remarkable maturation of labour relations and labour relations structure here in the province of Ontario and throughout most of the civilized world. We, as a Legislature, should be nurturing that sophisticated process. We should be supporting it, encouraging parties to labour disputes to negotiate in good-faith bargaining, because a negotiated settlement, a negotiated resolution, a negotiated solution is far more likely to be complied with voluntarily, without coercion, without threats by both parties to an agreement, and serves the public better. The experience with arbitrated settlements has inevitably been that they are higher and the taxpayer pays. They produce settlements that aren't the result of collaboration and negotiation, which this bill is the negation of.

## PETITIONS

### RURAL AND NORTHERN SCHOOLS

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have a petition to save rural and northern schools in Ontario, and it's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas rural and northern schools are an important part of Ontario; and

"Whereas rural and northern schools are widely recognized for their high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the frameworks of rural and northern schools are different from large urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural and northern school policy; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep swimming pools open in Toronto schools but hasn't found any money to keep rural and northern schools open in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of rural and northern Ontario and suspend all accommodation reviews until the province develops a rural and northern school policy that recognizes the values of these schools in their communities."

I've signed this.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST)."

I agree with the petition and will sign my name to it.

### WASTE DISPOSAL

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I have a petition that contains over 2,200 signatures of concerned citizens from the township of Russell, delivered to me at my constituency office on last December 14 by the former mayor of Russell township, Roger Pharand. I understand their concern and why they are worried.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned residents of the united counties of Prescott and Russell in the province of Ontario, draw the attention of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to the following:

"Whereas the petitioners have serious grievances with the proposed development by Taggart Miller Environmental Services, proponents of the Capital Region Resource Recovery Centre (CRRRC) planned for the old Russell shale pit and surrounding properties between Eadie Road and North Russell Road, between routes 100 and 200 in the township of Russell;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take action to cause an absolute cease and desist order for this proposed CRRRC development by Taggart Miller Environmental Services on this site of the old Russell shale pit and surrounding properties in the township of Russell in the province of Ontario.

I give that to Nicolas to take over to the Clerk.

### RURAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** A petition to save Duntroon Central Public School and all other rural schools in Clearview township:

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the frameworks of rural schools are different from urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them"; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep rural schools open in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario."

I agree with the petition and I will sign it.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition containing 4,500 names that were gathered by Mr. Bill Scott from Friends of the Memorial as well as John from Friendly to Seniors, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the continued and projected need for long-term-care facilities in our community is having serious adverse effects on Sudbury Regional Hospital emergency departments and acute care services due to the ALC (alternate level of care) patients at this facility; and  
1550

"Whereas the North East Local Health Integration Network alternate/appropriate level of care steering group recommended the Memorial site transitional care unit remain open until 2013; and

"Whereas the mayor and council's seniors' advisory panel passed a motion that the Memorial site transitional care unit remain open and accept all alternate-level-of-care patients currently at the Sudbury Regional Hospital site;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To instruct the provincial authorities involved, including the North East Local Health Integration Network, the North East Community Care Access Centre and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, to reverse the decision to close on March 31, 2011, and maintain the operation of the Memorial site transitional care unit until such time as suitable and sustainable alternate-level-of-care accommodations are made available."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it, and ask page Nicolas to bring it to the clerks' table.

#### PARAMEDICS

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I present this on behalf of the constituents of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex who have signed this, as well as the family of Paul Patterson.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in serving Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I, of course, will sign my name to this one.

#### OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition from my riding of Durham which reads as follows:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier government to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permit process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Minister of the Environment initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the Oak Ridges moraine until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to prevent contamination of the Oak Ridges moraine"—specifically, on Lakeridge Road.

I am pleased to sign and present this petition to one of the new pages, Benjamin.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** “We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST).”

I sign this petition.

## PARAMEDICS

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

“Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in serving Ontarians; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

“Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

“Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Enact Bill 115, a private member’s bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery.”

I am pleased to affix my signature to this.

## COYOTES

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas coyote predation is a growing problem in rural Ontario, especially on farms; and

“Whereas there are documented reports that coyotes are attacking people and pets and that the attacks are getting more aggressive; and

“Whereas as many as 6,000 lambs and sheep alone are killed by coyotes on Ontario farms every year; and

“Whereas these losses are seriously impacting farmers’ incomes; and

“Whereas the current control measures authorized by the Ministry of Natural Resources under the municipal financial incentives for control of coyote predation program are cumbersome and impossible to adhere to;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ontario government minimize predator losses by implementing a province-wide coyote control program that includes a \$200 bounty for each coyote carcass and allow counties to implement their own proof-of-kill collection system.”

I have signed this.

## DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Sudbury:

“Whereas the Ontario government” has made “PET scanning a publicly insured health service...;” and

“Whereas,” since “October 2009, insured PET scans” have been “performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens” of the northeast.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask our new page Emily to bring it to the Clerk.

## COYOTES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to thank Steve Kirkwood from my riding for providing me with this petition. It’s signed by residents in the North Augusta and Addison area. I want to commend the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for his initiative in writing it and providing it to my office.

It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas coyote predation is a growing problem in rural Ontario, especially on farms; and

“Whereas there are documented reports that coyotes are attacking people and pets and that the attacks are getting more aggressive; and

“Whereas as many as 6,000 lambs and sheep alone are killed by coyotes on Ontario farms every year; and

“Whereas these losses are seriously impacting farmers’ incomes; and

“Whereas the current control measures authorized by the Ministry of Natural Resources under the municipal financial incentives for control of coyote predation program are cumbersome and impossible to adhere to;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ontario government minimize predator losses by implementing a province-wide coyote control program that includes a \$200 bounty for each coyote carcass and allow counties to implement their own proof-of-kill collection system.”

It has been certified by the table. I’ll affix my signature and send it with Hailey.

## OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Sudbury and Nickel Belt:

“Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints in the areas of

hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes; and

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas;

"Whereas people wronged by those institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn to help correct systemic issues;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Nicolas to deliver it to the table. Nicolas is from Sudbury, by the way.

### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "Whereas the McGuinty government is conducting a review of the province's underserved area program ... that will result in numerous communities across rural and small-town Ontario losing financial incentives to recruit and retain much-needed physicians; and

"Whereas financial incentives to attract and keep physicians are essential to providing quality front-line health care services, particularly in communities in rural ridings such as Simcoe-Grey; and

"Whereas people across Ontario have been forced to pay Dalton McGuinty's now-forgotten health tax since 2004, expecting health care services to be improved rather than cut; and

"Whereas taxpayers deserve good value for their hard-earned money that goes into health care, unlike the wasteful and abusive spending under the McGuinty Liberals' watch at eHealth Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government immediately stop its ill-advised attack on rural health care and on rural communities who need financial incentives to successfully recruit and retain doctors."

I agree with the petition, and I've signed it.

1600

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### HEALTH PROTECTION AND PROMOTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011 LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION ET LA PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 8, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 141, An Act to

amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act / *Projet de loi 141, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** We're talking here about Bill 141, and I'm very pleased to be able to continue my remarks, as it turns out, in support of Bill 141.

Just to remind people what we were talking about: In the fall of 2009, as you all know, we had an H1N1 pandemic, and Ontario's public health system performed very well. Huge numbers of people were vaccinated and our hospitals managed to deal with the load of sick people that they were presented with and to take very good care of them. Our schools were closely monitored but were able to stay open.

However, I wouldn't like to suggest that everything ran smoothly. There are always some things that don't go quite as well as they might. A pandemic like this always offers us the opportunity to look at what worked, what didn't work and prepare for the next time so we can do a better job the next time around. What happened in this case, of course, was that Dr. Arlene King, the chief medical officer of health of the province of Ontario, undertook such a review, made recommendations about what we can do better in the future, and Bill 141 is based on Dr. King's recommendations—those recommendations that require legislation. Obviously, there are many other recommendations that we're acting on but which don't require legislation.

Basically, Bill 141 does three things: It gives the chief medical officer of health the authority to issue directives to local medical officers of health and boards of health in order to provide a coordinated response to a health emergency. Secondly, it expands the minister's authority to take over public premises during a public health emergency. Finally, it provides that a board of health may not appoint an acting medical officer of health for more than six months without the approval of the chief medical officer of health and the Minister of Health.

Back on December 8, when we were first debating this bill, I did have the opportunity to actually talk about the first two of those amendments. I know you were all listening very carefully and you remember every word I said, but just in case some of you weren't actually here, I thought maybe I should go over some of the highlights of those first two amendments before we look at the third amendment.

As I said, we had the experience of the H1N1 pandemic in 2009. It's an example of an emerging public health threat affecting Ontarians. It certainly will not be the last public health event that Ontario will have to deal with. But the experience does provide us the opportunity to reflect upon potential vulnerabilities in potential future, more serious pandemics; provincial, national or international public health events; and emergencies with health impacts.

Under Ontario legislation, Ontario has a highly decentralized public health system, with a great deal of local flexibility given to local medical officers of health

and local boards of health. Under that situation, local public health units led the response to H1N1 in their respective jurisdictions. This approach allowed communities to respond to local needs, such as demographic and geographic variations across communities. However, that decentralized approach also gives rise to variability across the province and sometimes the perception of inequitable access to pandemic response services. Media coverage clearly focused on long lineups, and sometimes there was the sense that people were not being given access to vaccines in the priority sequence and that queue-jumping was happening.

If we had had the ability to have explicit provincial direction, that would have helped clarify which group should get the vaccine first in different areas of the province. That's one area where there seemed to be some confusion. There might also have been an opportunity to look at some provincial direction, for example, on crowd management protocols and on how best to make sure that you could manage a lot of people wanting access to a vaccination in a very short time.

The first amendment deals with that variability and the inability to have a provincially coordinated response. The legislation, if passed, would create a new authority for the chief medical officer of health to direct boards of health and medical officers of health to adopt policies or measures in cases of a pandemic, public health event or an emergency with health impacts. These directives would be made in situations where the chief medical officer of health believes that such measures would protect the people of Ontario and are necessary to support a coordinated response to the event.

Directives would only be issued on matters related to infectious diseases, environmental health, public health emergency preparedness or other matters listed in a regulation. Any directive would be in force for up to six months, but the chief medical officer of health—who I'm going to start referring to as the CMOH because it takes less time—could terminate the directive earlier or reissue the directive after the six-month time period was up, as they deem necessary.

If the reissuance of a directive would result in the directive being in force for more than six months, the CMOH would be required to consult with affected local medical officers of health and boards of health before reissuing the directive.

If we want to facilitate coordinated, consistent responses to significant public health events, it is important to specify provincial requirements regarding critical parameters of the response, whether that be with respect to immunization response in a pandemic; product recall response to a food-borne disease outbreak; or a containment response to a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident, to give some examples. We need to have the authority for these directives to be issued by the chief medical officer of health. However, as I've said, there are a lot of details around when these can actually be offered. That's the first amendment.

The second amendment has to do with the taking over of public spaces for public health use. Post-SARS, we

had a very narrow ability to do that, which is, the legislation was altered to say that the chief medical officer of health can issue an order to take over a space specifically for the purpose of setting up an isolation ward.

We found with this health emergency that sometimes you need things for other purposes. So this would give broader power to take over public space in the case of a public health emergency. For example, it might be to set up a mass immunization centre, as we saw with H1N1, but it might also be to set up a space where you could assess people and treat them without moving people who have the disease and mixing them in with hospital space. If you had a biological or a chemical disaster, you might want to set up a containment place where people could be treated without contaminating others. There are a number of ways in which you might want to do this, but again there are quite strict regulations around this second amendment.

Finally, the act proposes changes to the way acting medical officers of health are appointed. Currently, acting MOHs do not require the approval of the CMOH or the minister. While acting MOHs are required to be physicians, they are not required to hold any other public health qualifications, and in some cases, acting MOHs, medical officers of health, have served for literally years because they have been appointed and reappointed and reappointed without ever gaining the appropriate qualifications.

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On the other hand, the appointment of a permanent MOH or an associate MOH does require approval by the minister, and that allows the minister to ensure that the medical officers of health are appropriately qualified.

The proposed amendment would require the approval of the minister and the CMOH to appoint an acting MOH for longer than six months. In other words, if the person is truly temporary, the local board can do it. If it's going to be a prolonged situation, then the minister and the CMOH have to look at it, and they may also have the power to apply conditions. Typically, that condition would be that this person will continue to act as the MOH, but while they are doing that, they will study and obtain the correct medical qualifications to act as a permanent MOH. That would be a typical sort of condition that would be put in place.

The approval of an acting MOH will then be aligned with the process for the approval of permanent MOHs and associate MOHs, and will allow the minister to ensure that people are fully qualified and that the health of Ontario's citizens is better protected.

We live in an increasingly globalized world. The movement of people, pathogens or micro-organisms, food products, consumer goods, what have you, can lead to security concerns. Because Ontario has so many people coming here for trade purposes, for visitor purposes—we have people from all over the world coming here, potentially introducing pathogens into our environment. Bill 141 will further protect the health of Ontarians against such threats.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to respond to the member from Guelph.

Bill 141 is kind of an apology for the way the previous pandemic unfolded under the government—H1N1 at the time—and this is recognizing the good and fine work done by the medical officer of health for Ontario, Dr. King. She summarized that in a report that ended up in this Bill 141.

I'm also reviewing the comments made when it was first introduced on December 8, 2010, just before the House adjourned for the winter break. It is quite interesting because our critic Christine Elliott, I think, did a very commendable job in being fair, in being reasonable, and also trying to bring forward that this is something that is very important to all Ontarians regardless of where they live. We can't have different programs, not in this area or in any other area, different programs for different areas of Ontario, so let it be a lesson that there were so many people involved and the decision-making process was rather fragmented. We had the role of the Canadian medical group that were commenting on it, as well as the authorities.

So I think it's very important that what this bill does is sort of sort out who does what in the case of something that is identified as a pandemic.

If you look at the history here, all four of the original cases emanated from Durham, which is my riding. It's very important to put that on the record here. I don't think there was much infrastructure in place. We all say in this place that everyone would agree that we should have a strong, well-funded response to these kinds of things that challenge people's lives, but when you examine it, Dr. King said in fact we did not.

This bill attempts to respond to Dr. King's remarks, and I would—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Clearly, Bill 141 attempts to increase or increases the powers of the chief medical officer of health and ensures coordination among local health units in the event of a pandemic or health emergency. It seems like a no-brainer to support it—it seems, and yet there are a couple of things.

The Association of Local Public Health Agencies has raised serious concerns about Dr. King's recommendations, presumably on which Bill 141 is based, for additional powers for the chief medical officer of health. They argue that the lack of standardization across the province was not the cause of the disarray that occurred during H1N1. In fact, ALPHA argues that it was this one-size-fits-all approach that was part of the problem. It's an interesting comment, and I'd be interested to hear what more they have to say on that matter.

Another little problemo: Some 10 days after Bill 141 passed first reading, the Ministry of Health released their findings on Ontario's response to H1N1. It's a curious thing to me: Why did it come 10 days after as opposed to

10 days before the bill was passed? You then would assume that the two were working hand in hand and that the bill was passed with, presumably, the recommendations made by the findings on Ontario's response to H1N1. It didn't happen.

There are a number of concerns that our member from Nickel Belt has raised. We want to make sure we get full hearings so that we can hear everyone and make sure we achieve the balance that we're looking for.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I think the member from Guelph now, on two occasions—she had started her speech earlier, when we recessed on December 9, and continued her remarks today.

I've had the pleasure of working with two MOHs in the riding of Peterborough: Dr. Garry Humphreys and then, when Garry retired, Dr. Rosana Pellizzari. We've had numerous discussions about planning for a pandemic and future pandemics. I remember Dr. Humphreys would always provide a case study about the Spanish influenza in 1917, 1918 and 1919 in terms of the probabilities of a pandemic moving forward and, in fact, a pandemic covering the world.

We're lucky: There was good planning in place for H1N1. Dr. King took the opportunity to look at that. It's very important, when a dramatic situation does occur, that we do take the time to review it and then, of course, find ways that improvements can be made for the future.

I think we're safe to say that the laws of probability of another pandemic being here to challenge us sometime in the future are quite real. As we approve Bill 141, that will strengthen Ontario's position.

Dr. King really is an outstanding person. She has provided great advice. The member from Guelph, I think, has done a good job in highlighting the key points of the bill. Ontarians will certainly be better protected as we plan for the future.

I know all of us in our own right, of course, are looking at ways, in terms of hygiene and other things, to make sure that we prevent the spreading of various diseases, and this bill will be an important piece of that future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to ask the members of the Liberal government one thing about this bill; it comes in under section 97. It says, "Section 97 of the act is amended by adding the following clauses" and it goes on to say, "defining or further specifying the meaning of any or all" of the following phrases: "infectious disease," "environmental health," "pandemic," "provincial, national or international public health," and on and on.

They have a bill in front of the House, but they don't have the definitions of what the words mean in the bill. Certainly, the cart is in front of the horse in this respect. It's very odd to be asking this House to pass a bill when we haven't even defined what the terminology in the bill is.

This is the first that I've ever seen where a government has brought forward a piece of legislation and hasn't even identified or defined what the terminology is. This is absolutely crazy, and I would like to see somebody from the government side, this afternoon during debate, explain how it is that we can pass a piece of legislation without understanding what the words are in the legislation, without having any definition for those phrases. Once that is answered, then we can begin to have a far more intelligent discussion on the merits of the bill itself.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Guelph has two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you to the members for Durham, Trinity-Spadina, Peterborough, and Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington for their questions and comments, and appreciation to the member from Durham, who noted that not only were Dr. King, our chief medical officer of health, and the local medical officers of health involved in this, but in fact the federal government was very much involved in procuring and distributing the vaccination, and of course, the World Health Organization was involved. Trying to get all these levels coordinated was quite a challenge, and we certainly need to have a better ability to coordinate what we're doing within Ontario.

With respect to language in bills, this bill, like any other bill, uses plain, ordinary English language, so you can refer to the Oxford dictionary. But we have reserved that if it's necessary, there can be, by way of regulation, further definition of some of those words, and we have specifically talked to the medical officers of health around the province and committed to them that any regulations that are written will be done with their consultation, so if there is a need to further clarify, we will work with the local medical officers of health to provide that clarification.

But I do hope that we will have the support of all the members of the House for this piece of legislation, because as we plan for future pandemics, it is very important that we have the authority to have a coordinated response. That doesn't mean exactly the same in every place in Ontario. There might well be different directives for northern Ontario and for southern Ontario, but we do need to have a coordinated approach.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** It's good to be back in the assembly this afternoon, and I say a belated happy new year to you and to all of my colleagues.

I've been listening with interest, and I'm glad to add a few words of my own on the subject of Bill 141, entitled the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act, 2010. The first thing I would observe is that this is about as simple a title as you can get from this Liberal government in terms of titling bills. I'm surprised they didn't call it the "we really did a great job but think we could probably do a better one next time around, in case

there's a pandemic that doesn't materialize act, 2010." But that's what it seems to be.

The first thing that I want to recall is what happened a year and a half ago for all of us in our ridings, for all of us in our homes. There is probably not a member in this Legislature who didn't hear from constituents during the course of the fall of 2009 because of one problem or another that materialized in that time period pertaining to H1N1. A lot of people, with a lot of trepidation, mothers and fathers of children, older people, people in affected groups or more affected groups, were very concerned with what would happen if they didn't get the vaccine in time, because this was certainly a sky-is-falling scenario. And just so that we make this clear, I'm not making light of this in using that kind of terminology. This was a legitimate fear, and I think one in which we all shared.

But if you search your memory and you think about what was happening, the complaints took the form of examples like this: "There's not enough vaccine at this particular spot, and there are lineups around the block," or "We have too much vaccine and there's not enough of a lineup, and the vaccine has to be destroyed after a certain period of time." So it seemed to be a mismatch in a lot of areas, in terms of quantities of vaccine, quality of vaccine, the ability to administer the vaccine, conditions in the venues that were selected to administer the vaccine, and who was going to get it when. That's before you get into the issue of people who were jumping queues, and we've all heard reports of that on radio and television and in the newspaper. That's what was going on a year and a half ago. That suggests to me that all of the things that could have been done weren't done, and that's in a situation where there never really was a pandemic that materialized.

I found it interesting that the choice of words as signified by my friend from Lanark and as used by my friend from Guelph don't match the situation in every sense. I think that's what my friend from Lanark wanted to signify. For example, the member from Guelph kept referring to this as a pandemic. I'm not sure that this was a pandemic. It was an apprehended pandemic. We feared that there might be a pandemic or an epidemic, but there wasn't—again, not making light of it. Thank God, it wasn't a pandemic.

What we're looking at in this bill is planning for something that could one day eventuate and that we all hope won't.

The Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus identified a number of problems with the rollout of the H1N1 response back in the fall of 2009, and I have touched on a few of those in the past couple of minutes.

The management of the H1N1 outbreak was well coordinated internationally by the World Health Organization. We watched those nightly reports on television of people talking to us from Geneva about what was going on in the world on the question of H1N1. The federal government also was acknowledged to have done a good job.

The biggest problem was in the distribution of the vaccine at the provincial level here in Ontario, where it

was clear that there wasn't really any central oversight over the 36 public health units in Ontario, and that seems to be what this bill, in large part, wants to address.

The problems were identified by the chief medical officer of health in her June 2010 report, entitled *The H1N1 Pandemic—there's that word again—How Ontario Fared*. Again, this bill is largely a response to Dr. King's report.

The Health Protection and Promotion Act, or HPPA, is to be amended by this bill to require that the Minister of Health and chief medical officer of health approve any appointments of acting medical officers of health for a term of six months or more. This would be under pandemic or apprehended pandemic circumstances.

Secondly, the proposed act would amend the HPPA to allow the minister to make an order for the possession of publicly owned premises or part of a publicly owned premise for public health purposes. That's defined as an inoculation facility. What's being said there is that under certain circumstances that we could loosely describe as an emergency, the chief medical officer of health gets more extraordinary powers than ordinarily would be granted, and this kind of power is taken if the chief medical officer of health is of the opinion that there is an immediate risk of an outbreak of a communicable disease or to the health of persons in Ontario.

Finally, this proposed act would amend the HPPA to allow that the chief medical officer of health could issue a directive to any board of health or medical officer of health requiring the adoption or implementation of certain policies or measures in the event of, or "an immediate risk of, a provincial, national or international public health event, a pandemic or an emergency with health impacts anywhere in Ontario; and ... that the policies or measures are necessary to support a co-ordinated response...." That's a lot of fairly legal jargon. What it says is, if something like H1N1 is believed to be in the process of materializing in our area, then the chief medical officer of health has powers to do what needs to be done to address the public health in those circumstances.

The first thing that I should say is that our caucus will be supporting this bill. There's nothing here that is of such detail or attention that we find any need to go against it. There are a number of challenges and concerns with the bill, however, and the first thing that I would like to cite was mentioned today in the presentation of another bill by one of our critics—and this happened to our critic the member from Whitby when this bill was presented. I'm quoting from Ms. Elliott in Hansard, upon presentation of the bill, where she said, "Unfortunately, as has become the norm here, I am responding to a piece of legislation that has just now been delivered to me, so I'm a little bit short on details." We heard that again today, so I might, without deviating too much from the substance of the bill, say to the Liberal government: If you want to present bills, particularly ones like this where you have a legitimate reason to believe that we won't argue too much with you and we'll actually

support them, could you please give us the details of that bill before the fact so we can give you an adequate response? That was housekeeping.

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But mainly in response to Dr. King's report, *The H1N1 Pandemic—How Ontario Fared*, there were a number of key problems with the rollout of the H1N1 response to last fall's outbreak. I mentioned already that international and national handling of that outbreak was generally acknowledged to be well managed. Ontario was lucky that emergency rooms did not see a larger surge of patients. I think that, if you take a look at what is in this bill and, more particularly, if you take a look at what is not in this bill, the issue would be that in the event of something happening of the magnitude and scope that was envisioned for H1N1 at the time and that we are trying to address in this new bill as we go forward—what would have happened in emergency rooms, and still today, even upon passage of this bill, what would happen in emergency rooms remains a concern because I don't think, and I don't think most of the experts that I have spoken to believe, that we would have necessarily been adequately equipped to handle what could have been an unbelievable volume of very sick people in a minimum number of facilities.

While we were trying to address the issue of inoculation, and while this bill still looks at the ability to inoculate, because it looks at venues, delivery and administration, it doesn't talk to what would happen in the event that we have a lot of very ill people trying to seek access to emergency rooms that are ill-equipped to handle them. Dr. King, the chief medical officer of health, noted that if ERs experienced a larger surge, we would be dealing with a very different reality right now. Since this bill—and let's deal with it on its terms—seeks redress for deficiencies that were discovered by way of Dr. King's report in how we handled the incipient pandemic back in the fall of 2009, may I go on the record and say that we should be looking at expansion beyond the scope of this bill to say, "Here's what would happen if that pandemic eventuality had come to pass and we had to deal with emergency rooms that were incapable of handling this load"?

We understand that the bill addresses the disparities between the chief medical officer of health and local medical officers of health in communicating during an outbreak. There are advantages in this kind of situation to having centralized control. The chief medical officer and the minister would be better able to direct resources where necessary; we understand that. But I still say that the resources we're talking about are resources that are largely involved in prevention and that don't, at this point, address treatment—dare I say "cure"? Careful management of resources can be monitored and distributed appropriately at a centralized location. One of the reasons we're supporting this bill is, we agree with that. But we would like to see some of the cracks in this bill filled in so that we look at not just the eventuality but the reality of a pandemic situation.

Let's talk for a moment about Panorama. Panorama would inherently ease the distribution and rollout of vaccines during such crises. Government has dragged its feet on the implementation of this very important and vital program. "Ontario will continue to take steps toward implementing Panorama, a pan-Canadian initiative which will improve public health surveillance and enhance the province's capacity to delivery immunization programs." Improving Ontario's Ability to Respond to Public Health Emergencies, a document from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care described as a backgrounder, said this on 29 November 2010. So Ontario will continue to take steps toward implementing Panorama.

Panorama has been in development for six years; six years and still not functional. So we have to ask ourselves the question: Why? Is this rot in the system? I'm just asking this rhetorically because six years is a very long time to address something that is urgent enough to have elicited a bill barely a year after something didn't materialize that could have materialized, and Panorama seeks to address that on a far wider basis than just the province of Ontario. So I have to ask myself if there's some rot in the system—maybe eHealth-style rot. I'm just saying.

Dr. Pellizzari, local medical officer of health in Peterborough, noted, "We're not collecting local data right now." She continued to explain that there are currently gaps in the health unit's surveillance. I'm continuing to quote: "Health Unit Looking at Doing More with Less", and that's from the Kawartha region, by Lauren Gilchrist, February 10 edition. So the health unit is looking at doing more with less. If we're going to deal with resources, let's not look at resources being insufficient to do what it is you have to do; that is a local medical officer of health in Peterborough who was saying that, not me. Panorama would help cast that health surveillance net that many health units such as this one are seeking. Government backtracking and ignoring the advice of experts is something that we see all too often in the province of Ontario. I raise the question, because it has to be raised, as to whether or not this is happening here.

So we're left with having to deal with a patchwork in order to create a fully integrated health protection and promotion system. What we're seeing in this bill is something worth supporting on our side. I've said we would support it because, on a stand-alone basis, it works. But on an integrated basis as part of our system used to address an eventuality like H1N1 or some other hideous, I could go as far as to use the word "plague," coming our way, we're not there. That's what the experts are saying: We're not there.

We quote again from Dr. King, who says in her report that it is essential that we "extend our chain of command to the local level." So there's this mismatch, this disconnect. You've got a local medical officer of health in Peterborough saying we don't have enough resources and you've a report from the chief medical officer saying we have to connect by a chain of command that addresses the local level.

Let me turn to southern York region, which is of maximum concern to me. In York region, where we are gravely underserved in our health unit requirements, the centralization of pandemic and outbreak surveillance and management would greatly have alleviated the pressures faced by the central LHIN and York Central Hospital. We don't have sufficient health coverage in York region at this point. The government knows this. We're sitting in abeyance on a new hospital for the southern part of York region to the west, which would be co-operated by York Central Hospital, that hospital known as the Vaughan hospital, but it awaits approval by that government.

We're talking about resources like that, and we're also talking about the fact that the Central LHIN is constrained from spending in York region because allocation of resources to York region has not matched the growth of York region, as is the case outside of the 416 in a lot of areas. The average spending on health care outside of York region—and, let's be specific, in the 416—is somewhere above \$900 per year per capita, whereas as soon as you cross Steeles Avenue you're into about a \$200 chop; \$700 and change in York region. That funding formula has to be revisited. That also addresses the issue of resources in York region.

"Health care is a top issue affecting York region in terms of access to both practitioners and health services locally. Recent studies have found that health care services in the 905 area are currently lacking as compared to the greater Toronto area, and many residents—particularly in rural areas—may be greatly underserved with respect to physical and mental health services." That was taken from "York in York Region: York University's Strategic Advantage," commenting on health delivery services in York region in an article that's quite old now, so you'd think it would have been addressed—November 2007.

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York region clinics saw over 1,290 patients receive the vaccine every single day. However, because of the lack of coordination, these clinics were overcapacitated and forced to turn away potentially infected patients. I'm quoting: "York Region H1N1 Flu Immunization Clinics at Full Capacity," and that's from [york.ca/H1N1](http://york.ca/H1N1) in the fall of 2009. That's York region commenting on itself. It could only do what it could do.

Centralized chain of command—great idea. That's what this bill is about. Adequate resources—also a great idea, but that's not what this bill is about. That's what's lacking—sadly lacking.

In terms of overall support on the part of this side of the House, I'm pleased to stand today in support of Bill 141, but I want to point out that while it deserves the support of all, it is only a piece of a puzzle that has to be established, and it is a barn-door piece of legislation. We're closing the barn door after the horse has bolted. I think we all, on all sides of this House, know that.

I think what's also important is that, if we know that, we don't want to be caught flat-footed somewhere down

the road where we actually have a pandemic materialize and we have to ask questions later, God help us, with some large number of people very ill or even dying. This could happen, and this is what we're trying to avert.

The government has not kept its promise in several areas that affect the health care system. This side of the House understands what our health care professionals need. The Liberal government continues to waste hard-earned tax dollars that could be going to the front lines of our health care system. Rather than pointing fingers at us—we're not in power at this point; we certainly expect to be by the end of the year. You people are in power. Take a look at yourself. Don't point your finger unless your hands are clean.

The bottom line is, you have to put as much into front-line health care as you can. Tim Hudak and a Progressive Conservative government will see to it that every single dollar of health care money goes to front-line health care. That's what we have to do; that's what you have to do.

I hope that we can move quickly, pass this legislation, get on with it and expand it to the point where it addresses what has to be addressed for the good of all Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'd like to address some of the comments from—I'm going to say "the member for Thornhill." That's even right. So I will address the member from Thornhill.

First of all, the member made some comments early in his remarks about what seemed to be sometimes a mismatch between the vaccine that was available and what people were doing with it. Quite frankly, that's one of the reasons why we need coordination of service, because what was happening was that on Friday afternoon, often quite late on Friday afternoon, our Minister of Health and chief medical officer of health would learn from the federal Minister of Health how much vaccine would be available in Ontario on Monday. So they literally had the weekend to figure out how to distribute it around the province. Although they gave advice, saying to the medical officers of health, "This is how you should be using the vaccine that becomes available this week," what often happened was that the medical officers of health didn't necessarily follow that advice. Under this act, there would be much more coordination; the ability to deal in that sort of frantic rollout, which was the experience that we had; and the ability to give coordinated advice about how the vaccine should be used, who it should be targeted at and who it should be delivered to in each jurisdiction.

There were some questions raised as to what you would do if the hospitals were overwhelmed. Well, that's the second amendment I mentioned, which was the ability to take over other public places in an emergency situation to set up assessment, treatment and referral centres. In fact, that already did happen; there were stand-alone centres.

With respect to the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Thornhill—I listened outside. I've spoken on this bill before so I can't speak again, but I can do a two-minute response. I think he covered it when he said this bill is kind of acknowledging that they're shutting the barn door after the horse is gone, and it's clear that we support the implementation.

If you look at the history here, there is the Panorama strategy, which is the federal strategy, which was adopted right after the SARS epidemic, catastrophe, whatever definition you want to put on it. But there's a case where we've been warned once. You can be excused for that, but now that you look at the evidence of the last one—and Dr. King is right. They had 19 people telling you every night on the news about the adjuvanted and the certain groups that could take it and certain groups—people were just completely bewildered. To me, in a lot of ways that represents the way Premier McGuinty is implementing the new Green Energy Act. Everything they do is so haphazard. Even the HST—in fairness, it's the same thing. It's just "tax everything," and then two months later they're rolling back part of it. They're fixing this and fixing that.

This is not a simple political manoeuvre, I hope. Let's try to get it right. Listen to our critic and our leader, Tim Hudak. I think we'll be working with you to make this stronger—along with having a plan that's going to address the large nature.

If you look at the comments made by Dr. King, she said the world is a smaller place today. We are connected. What she says here is, this stuff travels to Toronto—named as one of the places that's the most susceptible because of the very cosmopolitan, welcoming—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm looking to the member from Thornhill to help me with this question, because I asked the member from Guelph and she didn't quite answer it, but in response to you she makes reference to lack of coordination as being a problem here—and I raised an issue. The Association of Local Public Health Agencies, otherwise known as ALPHA, has raised serious concerns with Dr. King's recommendations. They argue that the lack of standardization across the province was not the cause of the disarray that occurred during the H1N1. In fact, ALPHA argues that it was this one-size-fits-all approach that was part of the problem.

I'm not sure whether you have an opinion on this, because I didn't get an opinion from the member from Guelph, but I wonder whether you have one, and I wonder about whether or not you're calling for public hearings, because we want full consultations in order to be able to get people to come and talk to us about this so that we can get the right balanced approach to this problem.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'd love to provide a quick comment for the member for Thornhill because I think he made some excellent points. He used the words, "This is just one piece of the puzzle."

I want to pick up on this issue of Panorama that the government has been working on for a number of years.

The quote from Dr. King, the chief medical officer of health, that I think is pertinent to the debate today is:

"This was the largest and most rapidly executed immunization program in Ontario's history. We underestimated the logistics of organizing and delivering a mass campaign in extraordinarily tight time frames, across a vast province, in the glare of intense media coverage and in the face of rising demand. We underestimated lineups and demand surges. We had different plans unfolding in different communities, with the result being a different level of service depending on where you were in the province. We didn't fully leverage the primary care physicians who traditionally deliver the seasonal shot. And in too many critical ways, we didn't have the details we needed about how the immunization program was unfolding.

"That last point is critical. In an era where there is much talk about electronic health systems and patient records, we do not have in this province the capacity to electronically manage and track our immunization programs."

This is the government that wears the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle. Again, if this is the piece of the puzzle, why isn't Panorama mentioned in this piece of legislation? Clearly, the chief medical officer of health indicates this point is critical. If this is the critical point, if having the electronic system to track immunization is so important, why hasn't this government added it to the bill? It's silent. That—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member from Thornhill has two minutes to respond.

1650

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you to my colleagues from Guelph, Durham, Trinity-Spadina and Leeds-Grenville for their comments.

I think what this bill says to me is that we have an opportunity to do better. That's, effectively, what the message was from Dr. King. The report that was provided by Dr. King was a good report. I think what the government is trying to do here is act on that report, but there are some points being raised around this chamber that make an awful lot of sense.

My friend from Durham, for example, talks about the fact that people were confused. Yes, people were confused because there was a communications piece—Dr. King doesn't talk that much about communications, and this bill doesn't address communications—that has to somehow or other be addressed along the way so that we know what we're saying to all of the people in Ontario at any given time so they understand, in turn, what they are supposed to do. If you had communicated properly about where the vaccine was, how to get it, the levels of

intensity with which you were able to get it; i.e., if you were an older person and more feeble or a younger person, more junior, you had a particular place in line.

What it comes down to is the old saw, "If you want to start a small business, start a large one and give it to the Ontario government to run." Effectively, that's how we run health care. The problem with health care in this province or, for that matter, any other province, is we've got one supplier, folks. That's it.

My friend from Trinity-Spadina asks the question about lack of coordination and whether it was indeed a one-size-fits-all issue that caused some of the problems that Dr. King has addressed. I don't necessarily think so. I think that if you create coordination, one size fits all in terms of distribution of the vaccine, for example, works. How it's distributed in York region is going to be widely variant from how things go down in Timmins just because of geography.

This bill needs work, but we support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on Bill 141. It's a pleasure to be back again at the assembly on behalf of my constituents in Ottawa Centre.

I'm heartened by the discussion I'm hearing. I think that's why we are all elected: to look at bills and understand them better and the implications to our communities across the province and to provide our input as to how to shape the bill better. I think that's what the nature of the debate has been so far.

It is an important issue. I think the context is extremely important, in this particular case, when we're dealing with Bill 141, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

I had the opportunity to look into the Health Protection and Promotion Act when I was drafting another private member's bill, Bill 194. That was to create a public health agency in the city of Ottawa. Essentially, what I was doing through my private member's bill was amending the City of Ottawa Act to ensure the public health agency in the city of Ottawa is not just run by the city but has its own independent board. As opposed to politicians like you and I making decisions on important public health issues, the experts are the ones making those decisions. Now, my private member's bill never got debated on this floor because, thankfully, the government adopted my bill in 2009. It was then enacted and is now being enforced in the city of Ottawa, but the principle was an important one.

I think that important principle applies here in Bill 141 as well, that principle being that when we are looking at issues that are important to public health, that impact all of us individually and as a community, those decisions should be made by medical experts, those who have expertise in public health. Those decisions, of course, should not be made by individuals like you and I because we do not have expertise—again, we're dealing with people's lives here—but they should be made by public

health agencies and medical officers of health. Of course, in Ontario, we have a chief medical officer of health for Ontario as well.

Why has this debate now come up again? I was hearing about this from various members: the response to how the H1N1 crisis was dealt with. It was speculated that it was going to be a major pandemic. It was significant around the world, and steps needed to be taken to ensure that the public in Ontario—Ontarians—were safe and that they'd get the proper vaccination across the province. I stress "across the province"—regardless of where they live. I think that's a very important point. It does not matter if you're an Ontarian and you live in Toronto, Ottawa, Kingston, Windsor—that's just to mention the larger cities in the province—or in smaller towns, be it in Lindsay or be it in Kenora or other towns across the province. That is, I think, the crux of this bill: that when we are dealing with issues like pandemics, which could be deadly—we have, God forbid, a potentiality of losing many lives—when we're dealing with issues around pandemics and an approach to dealing with that particular pandemic, that there be a coordinated approach.

What this bill is essentially doing is giving the chief medical officer of health of Ontario more enhanced oversight authority to help ensure that Ontario's public health effort and response to a pandemic are better coordinated. I think that's an important task to undertake.

Yes, we've got, under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, individual health agencies that exist in municipalities or under regional municipalities, and they would—could—and they do address their community's public health issues from community to community. But in the case of something large, like a pandemic like H1N1 or SARS—many of us remember when that took place—or where there is some sort of a national or international public health event that is going on or there is a larger emergency that could affect the health of Ontarians, there should be a mechanism to ensure a coordinated response, a coordinated reaction to that particular emergency or pandemic. The bill is trying to pull all that together, essentially.

In this particular case, I think what's happened is what should always happen: After dealing with the H1N1 situation, we made sure that we looked at how well we did in the H1N1 crisis. It was not a test run; it was not a dry run. It was a real, live situation that allowed us to evaluate. We were lucky that we dealt with it well and that Ontarians were able to get the proper vaccination across the province. But it was not smooth; I think we debated that in this legislation. It could have been better. Having a post-mortem, no pun intended, is important in that type of situation.

I can just speak from my example in Ottawa during the H1N1 crisis and how the situation was dealt with in Toronto. As I recall, when we were reacting to the pandemic, there was quite a different response. I may be biased, but the response in Ottawa was far better coordinated; it was far better targeted in making sure that

the citizens of Ottawa got access to the H1N1 vaccination.

As you may recall, Madam Speaker, there was a priority list as to who could go first. Children were, I think, at the front end and then it depended on age categories etc., whereas the situation in Toronto was slightly different. I think there were broader concerns as to how the whole program was rolled out in Toronto, bigger queues and a little bit of panic that was associated with getting the vaccination.

I think what our chief medical officer of health did through her post-analysis was to see how did it work and how could it be improved, and produced a set of recommendations that are reflected in Bill 141. I think that's exactly how the system should work. That's exactly what we should do: When we deal with a situation, we should always strive to do better and evaluate how things work and how it could be improved.

1700

Reading through the material and reading through the bill, my understanding is that what Dr. King, Ontario's chief medical officer of health, is trying to do is that the kind of discrepancy in approach that was taken in Ottawa and in Toronto, two large cities—Toronto being the largest, Ottawa being the second largest—does not take place in the future, where a different level of service was provided when dealing with the situation in Ottawa versus the quality or level of service that was provided here in Toronto. How can we rectify that difference and make sure that we have a more sophisticated, a more coordinated effort next time around, God forbid, if there is a pandemic or an emergency which is large in nature and could affect the health of Ontarians, so that you've got quality response or reaction in both cities, and not only two cities like Toronto and Ottawa but every single community, town, village and hamlet across the province?

That is the main crux of this legislation: to ensure that we've got a very limited new authority that is being given to the medical officer of health of Ontario to deal in very limited and specific circumstances, to impose or implement a more coordinated response to any major future pandemic or other emergency that could affect the health of Ontarians. Of course, I think our role as a Legislature is to ensure that we debate the policy and that we ensure that the policy is right, that it meets its objectives as recommended by the medical officer of health. But I think we should give a lot of deference to the medical officer of health on this issue because she is, after all, the expert. She has far better and superior understanding of how responses to pandemics work, how things were rolled out and dealt with with H1N1—and for us to pay respect perhaps to those recommendations or pay heed to those recommendations because at the end of the day, we have to rely on experts when it comes to issues of health.

I go back to my original point I was making earlier: When it came to my city, we had a public health agency in Ottawa but it was not governed by an independent

board. It was governed, in our city of Ottawa, by the city council. Essentially what you had is politicians like you and I—duly elected, no doubt—who are making very important public health decisions, probably not the best approach to deal with that type of thing. We had some situations in Ottawa that did not work well. I remember when I used to sit on the board of the Centretown Community Health Centre, which is a very active community health centre in the city of Ottawa, working with other community health centres. We had some circumstances where city council decisions really did not meet what the science was telling or what the experts on the ground were telling. That's what propelled me to introduce Bill 194: to ensure the city of Ottawa has an independent board of public health, which the city is now in the process of putting forward. There are lots of citizens, actually—over 100 applications were received—who are putting forward their names to sit on this board, who have competence in public health issues, are able to make decisions on very important public health matters through experts. Of course, our role, or the role of city council in the case of Ottawa, is to defer to that independent board on various decisions. I think we should take the same approach. This debate is important, but I think we should look very carefully to the recommendation that is being made by Dr. King in light of the response to H1N1.

As a last point, I also take this opportunity to thank Dr. King and her staff and all public health agencies across the province for the remarkable job they did in dealing with a very stressful situation like that of H1N1. I think it was a great example of three levels of government working well together, federal, provincial and municipal governments, not only in Ontario but perhaps across Canada, and dealing with a very important and urgent health issue—which could have had a very devastating impact on our population—in a very effective manner.

Let's move forward. Let's look at the recommendations presented by the medical officer of health. Let's make this system even better, what is being suggested through Bill 141, so that the next time we're dealing with a big health emergency or with a future pandemic, we've got a more solid, coordinated approach to dealing with those situations.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity. I look forward to hearing the points of view of my colleagues on this important matter.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Just to comment on the lawyer—the member from Ottawa Centre and his speech. I'll bring this up again: I asked a question earlier of the Liberal government about having legislation that incorporates phrases and terminology that aren't defined. So once again, I'm going to ask somebody in the Liberal government, maybe the member from Ottawa Centre—he's a lawyer. Maybe he can explain this process of putting the cart before the horse to us. Later on, they're going to

define and specify the meaning of any and all of the following phrases: “infectious disease,” “environmental health,” “pandemic,” “provincial, national or international public health event”—I don't know if that's a conference or whatever that public health event is—and “public health emergency preparedness.” Now, I really would like to know what—and for the member, that's on page 4 of the bill: “Section 97 of the act is amended by adding the following clauses.”

What do those phrases mean? What are we getting ourselves into? What is a national or international public health event in this act? What is environmental health? Is that the health of the trees or the health of the river? What is environmental health? Explain that to me, and explain how this affects this legislation, not knowing what these terms actually mean and what their definition is.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I am pleased to comment on my colleague's speech from Ottawa Centre.

I think it's been an important piece of legislation. I think my friend has outlined that significantly in his remarks and brought the local situation in Ottawa into some clarity. I understand that this piece of legislation is proposed—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Well, in one way its implications are fairly narrow. They are to allow the chief medical officer of health more authority during times of pandemic, during times when there's a health emergency in Ontario. We all know from some very recent past experiences—H1N1 and some others—that we need to have a central authority to coordinate the work of all health units.

I would say that during this period of H1N1, Dr. Allan Northan, the chief medical officer of health of the Algoma region—that Algoma and Sault Ste. Marie were ahead of the curve. They did an absolutely magnificent job of providing vaccine to the people they needed to provide it to, in an appropriate time frame and without any kinds of real problems in the distribution.

That was not the case across all of the province, unfortunately. Some strong central leadership would have made sure that that happened. This is what this piece of legislation is about. I think that it behooves all members of the House to vote in favour of it. I've had some indication from the other side that that's actually to be the case.

I commend my colleague for his intervention and look forward to moving this bill along.

1710

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments or questions?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Ottawa Centre, who is a lawyer and also the president of the Liberal Party, spoke very well, and that would give him the qualifications to do that.

I want to first of all commend the medical officer of health for the region of Durham, Dr. Robert Kyle, and the staff who work in that area for their excellent report issued in October 2010. It's the pandemic H1N1 review, a very thorough and comprehensive review, and I'm reading part of the report—and our critic Christine Elliott did put some of this in the record.

Ontario received laboratory confirmation of its first four confirmed cases of the pH1N1 on April 28, 2009. All four of these cases were residents of Durham region, and two of them were actually in my riding of Durham. These were the earlier cases linked to Mexico. From then on, because I'm duly elected and was trying to stay up on it, I watched the news dutifully. Every night there would be a different person from a different level of government talking about what the plan was; and then the World Health Organization was ramping up the tension; and then we had the communications strategy, which would basically be the provincial level, talking about the adjuvanted and the non-adjuvanted, the scarcity, whether young children should have it or not have it, the pregnant women—they actually created a panic, not a pandemic.

We have listened to Dr. King, and we understand completely that she wants to take full control, because if you read the act itself—and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has said here that in the definitions it's quite startling. You should read subsections 77.9(1) and (2) of that part—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comment?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I just want to respond in this way. The Ministry of Health's report, Pandemic (H1N1) 2009, says, "At the local level, public health units reported that they worked closely with their local pandemic response partners. Many" local "public health units utilized and/or developed relationships with primary care providers, hospitals, local health integration networks (LHINs), First Nation organizations, school boards and community-based agencies. Public health units identified that these collaborations enabled the effective implementation of public health measures, and assisted in developing strategies to distribute vaccine and in some cases, implement alternate assessment, treatment and referral centres, or flu assessment centres. According to survey results from external health stakeholders, many respondents placed a high value on the relationships they formed over the course of the pH1N1 response and intend to leverage these relationships to enhance service delivery in their communities."

In other words, some of the most effective work was done at the local level. Some of the most effective work was done through decentralized networks. What the government is proposing is very centralized control.

This comment clearly outlines the benefit of local control. So what I'm left to ask is this: What will happen to this ability under the reforms suggested by this government in Bill 141?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Ottawa Centre has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to thank the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, the member from Durham and the member from Kenora–Rainy River for their points of view on the comments that I made earlier.

In response to the member from Lanark about definitions of certain terms that were used, and I think you asked me, sir, to speak as a lawyer, so I'll give you a very legal answer. It's difficult for me to answer those questions when I have not seen section 97 of the act which it refers to. Unless I see the full act, I can't give you the answer as to what those terms mean.

But I think, again, the bigger, broader issue here—and that may speak to the member from Kenora–Rainy River—is that one is not taking away the various municipalities' power to implement responses to pandemics. A couple of points: One, this legislation applies in very specific circumstances. That is an important one, so the decentralized nature that is our system remains. Secondly, in situations when this legislation would apply, what is being asked for is that there be a coordinated effort. Coordination implies that all parts of the system—be they municipal, obviously, boards of health and the provincial board of health—work together to ensure that they are providing a more systematic way of dealing with that particular emergency or pandemic. I don't see, personally, as I read this legislation or I read the report, taking away from the decentralized nature.

I think that system works, and we have seen it during H1N1, but making sure that there is a more coordinated or standardized delivery when it comes to those limited circumstances where this provision may apply—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I got quite an answer from the member from Ottawa Centre in response to an earlier question I asked about the definition of phrases. The member from Ottawa Centre said, well, he wouldn't know what they meant until he read the complete bill, until he read section 97. This is, of course, fundamental with the Liberal government, illustrated clearly by the member from Ottawa Centre. He is going to promote and advocate a bill that he hasn't read and doesn't understand—doesn't understand what the meanings of the phrases are, hasn't read the bill, but he stands up as a representative of those people and advocates for the passage of a bill that he has not read and does not understand. I can assure you, the good member is a lawyer, but I wouldn't want to be going to that—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I just remind the member to keep his comments relevant to the bill.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Sure.

Anyway, we know that this bill, Bill 141, is nothing less and nothing more than an apology for the horrendous rollout and actions that we saw during H1N1.

I'm going to refer back once again to the member from Ottawa Centre as he praised and glowed that H1N1 was a great example of three levels of government

working together. Well, if that was the case, why are they looking to make wholesale changes on how they would deal with a pandemic or perceived pandemic?

Really, I think by any reasonable and objective measure, it would be very hard to describe H1N1 as a pandemic. The good member from Durham has referred to it. We all recall those days, the days of panic- and fear-stricken people shown on television on every nightly news channel, how the fear about H1N1 was propagated and promoted, but there really was—and I think the public health unit in Hastings—I forget the gentleman's name right at the present time but I remember he said very clearly that this really wasn't a pandemic and there was no evidence of a pandemic. Again, not to make light of it, but we keep things in perspective here. Every year, of course, there are a hundredfold more people who suffer fatal illness from the common flu and from other things, but that's not called a pandemic, as H1N1 was referred to. Again, we still don't know just what a pandemic is because it hasn't been defined. We don't know what—

*Interjection.*

1720

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Well, you're saying you don't know because you're saying you're going to define it afterwards. Those are your words. Read the bill and you'll understand what you're promoting. You won't understand it until you actually read it.

What is environmental health? How do we explain that?

This is a legal document. It's going to be interpreted by lawyers. It's going to be interpreted by courts, by the bureaucracy, and this government is saying, "We don't have to understand what the terminology is in the legislation."

I do want to say something else. There's another little section in here—it's all under section 77 of the health promotion act—that shows up on page 2 of Bill 141: "The minister, in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (3), and subject to subsection (1.1) ... may require the occupier of any premises to deliver possession of all or any specified part of the premises to the minister to be used for public health purposes." That's key: any premises. The minister may require and take possession of any premises. There's only one little caveat to that, and thank God it's there. The next section, section (1.1), says, "The minister may only make an order ... with respect to premises that are publicly owned premises, unless the premises are to be used as a temporary isolation facility."

Again, we're not quite sure what all this terminology means, but we do know that the authority to take possession of private property is included in this act.

I'm sure that once again, the Liberals will have the opportunity to get up and speak. I've raised a number of these questions earlier. None of them have been able to answer those questions—other than the fact that they haven't read it and they don't understand it and they can't tell us what it means, but they're going to promote

it and approve of this bill regardless of their lack of knowledge about this bill.

I think members from the third party have also raised some interesting and very significant concerns about this bill: about the centralized planning that is flourishing in our health system under Bill 141, and how the local health units have indicated that planning was not the problem with the H1N1, and if there was any problem, it was the centralized nature of that planning—the inability for local people to act quickly, timely, decisively because of centralized decision-making.

I want to go back once more to a key phrase, on page 1 of Bill 141: "No person shall perform any duties or exercise any powers under this section unless ... approved in writing by ... the chief medical officer of health." That's an awful lot of authority to rest in one individual—that you need to have written permission for the exercise of any duties. I understand why the local health units are concerned with Bill 141. Increasingly, more and more power and authority is being put into fewer and fewer hands.

We know—well, we've seen it. This Liberal government has shown time and time again what happens when you concentrate authority into fewer and fewer hands. We just have to look at the Premier and the boondoggle at eHealth. We can look at the Premier and the Ministry of Energy and the boondoggles happening in microFIT and all of our electrical generation programs. More and more authority is being divested into fewer hands.

I guess I could say this: No legislation can compensate for incompetence. No legislation can remedy incompetence, ineptness. But this is what this government always thirsts for: more legislation to try to not remedy their incompetence but to hide their incompetence, to try to demonstrate that they have some interest in fixing things. But really, the only thing they have an interest in is putting more and more authority into fewer and fewer hands, concentrating and centralizing that decision-making and being able to hide from their due diligence of actually reading and understanding the legislation that they're voting on.

I think every person in this province expects a government member to actually not just hear what they're to do, not just be told what to do by that centralized power within their party, but there's an expectation by the people of this province that an elected representative actually understands what they're doing.

I look forward, I really do look forward, to the member from Ottawa Centre, the member from Guelph or any member—or the minister—explaining some of those key questions that I've asked today. What do these phrases mean and why are these phrases not defined prior to voting for this bill? Explain to us how environmental health, a national or international public health event, infectious disease or pandemic—any of these—are going to be defined. What is going to be the consequence for people?

I also want this government to explain to me under what specific circumstances the minister will be able to

take possession of private property, because there is no mention of compensation in this for the taking of private property. What checks and balances is this government going to propose to limit that minister's authority, and what compensation is this government going to offer up if that case is ever exercised?

The taking and possessing of private property by the minister is not to be thought of lightly. It's not to be discounted. This government has an obligation to itself and, more importantly, to the people of this province, to ensure that the proper checks and balances are indeed included.

I want this government to explain to me why nobody will be able to perform any duty unless they have the written permission of the chief medical officer of health.

Those are a few of the questions that I have. I wait patiently for an answer from this Liberal government to those questions on Bill 141.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Just a few brief responses to what the member said: First of all, the authority to take possession of private property for the purpose of creating an isolation ward is actually already in the act. We aren't changing that. That was put in the act post-SARS. It's there.

1730

What we are saying is, we need access to premises under emergency situations for more than just isolation wards, but we're restricting it to public places. There's absolutely no mystery about what "public place" means. It's actually defined in the act as places that are part of the broader public sector according to the Financial Administration Act. That seems pretty clear to me. In fact, it includes—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Private property, Liz.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** You weren't listening: That's already in the act. The amendment is for public places.

It includes things like schools, colleges, universities, other health service providers and municipalities—the things that you would think common English would tell you are public places that belong to the broader public sector.

The reason we need those is, suppose you have something that is highly contagious, and the local hospital is already full. We might want to set up a temporary place where people can go for assessment and treatment where they aren't infecting the other people who are in the hospital with, maybe, a heart problem or a baby that's just been born; you don't want to expose them. We are setting up having the facility to set up something temporary where we can actually have people—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Lanark—Frontenac.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Lanark—Frontenac. That was the other member. Lanark—Frontenac and Addington, right?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Close enough.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Anyway, he makes a couple of very good points. I think he uncovered some things that are, if you look at it, suspicious. I think that's our duty in opposition here, to point out things that don't exactly line up with what the intent is that we're being told.

Here's what Dr. King said in her remarks: "We live in a truly interconnected world, and with that interconnectedness comes vulnerability to literally any disease that emerges anywhere in the world. Because of air travel, a disease can take less than a day to travel around the globe under the right, or wrong, circumstances. A recent study, for example, found Toronto to be one of the most vulnerable cities in the world in that regard because of our high volume of air travel to and from a great number of different locations."

"Simply put, we know beyond a shadow of doubt that at some point, there will either be another pandemic, or another emerging infectious disease event like SARS, that will require a provincial response."

Dr. King gets it. I understand the importance of having a plan, but let's go to first principles. It's an admission that you had no plan. That's scary, when you think of it. Yet when I turned on the television, there were several different people, Dr. So-and-so, Ph.D., eminent immunologist, etc.

I can only say this: There are doctors in this Legislature that aren't being appropriately assigned tasks which they're capable of performing. I say that quite genuinely. We put people in charge of things who haven't got the foggiest idea, specifically in health care. I can say that there's a former medical—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comment?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I've had the opportunity now to listen to some government spokespersons, and I just listened to my colleague from the Conservatives. While I don't agree on most health care issues with members of the Conservative caucus, I do think my colleague has hit upon something here.

We find that this bill is really one of overwhelming centralization, that it really does take away some of the capacity of local health units to respond to what they see on the ground. It is another one of those "Let's run it all from Queen's Park" things. We've seen lots from this government of "Let's run it all from the Premier's office." We've seen lots of fiascos that that leads to.

New Democrats continue to have a real concern that this will actually do more harm than good. They're trying to centralize control in dealing with a possible pandemic which has all kinds of possible permutations in a province the size of Ontario, which has some very large cities, some very small towns, some very large rural areas, some very isolated First Nations. Trying to put all of your eggs in one centralized basket is, we think, a very big mistake. I would hope that someone from the government side would stand up and explain why they're so all-fired interested in centralizing everything once again.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments? The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Once again I want to thank the member from Kenora–Rainy River, the member from Durham and the member from Guelph on their comments. Of course once again, the member from Guelph was very adept at answering a question that wasn't asked and not answering the question that was asked. But what is clear with Bill 141 is that this government responds to headlines, and their policies are nothing more than slogans. Those three questions—three questions were asked: Why are those terms used in this act without having definitions included with them? Why is the minister able to take possession of private property with no mention of compensation, no checks and balances included on that authority? And why this thirst and desire for centralized control to the nth degree with the chief medical officer of health?

All these questions are nice, simple, easy questions but I understand it's very difficult for the Liberals to answer them when they have not actually read the bill. Maybe this evening when they go home, they'll actually take some time to print the bill off, sit down, put their feet up and read—read what it is that they're proposing instead of just responding to headlines and in a fear-panicked headlong rush bringing in legislation to try to remedy their incompetence throughout this land.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to join the debate. The Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act, 2011: This bill is extremely important to strengthen and better coordinate the province's response for future public health emergencies or events such as pandemics.

I wasn't involved in any great way in the SARS epidemic in 2003 except to follow it in the newspapers, but the H1N1 in 2009 certainly brought a lot of problems to our area of Orléans and Ottawa. There were a lot of uncertainties. I recall a big line of people, mothers and fathers with their young children out in the cold weather, maybe waiting for an hour. It took a few days to get organized, to get them inside our new Shenkman centre and have that whole system where the people were at least covered from the elements—who should be tested first and how was it all to go forward? This bill will strengthen and better coordinate the province's response for future public health emergencies or events such as pandemics. Overall, the proposed amendments would strengthen the province's ability to plan, manage and respond. That has to be extremely important. We came off easily with the H1N1 because it wasn't as bad as we thought it was, but we certainly have to prepare for the worst. I think that this bill goes a long way in strengthening that preparation for future pandemics; provincial, national or international public health events; and/or other emergencies that affect the health of Ontarians.

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I think what we see in this new world that we have is that the unexpected occurs more often, and so being

prepared—isn't that the Boy Scouts' way of thinking?—being prepared is important, and bringing forward this bill helps that preparation, helps us be more confident.

We'll get away from the issues that did come out in the H1N1 in the Ottawa area, and I'm sure across the province, where councillors were writing me to get to the Minister of Health to get the changes made in the procedures. We had hockey players, I think, getting in the line early, if I recall right. Anyway, there were a lot of things that just didn't go as well as they should have.

So knowing what we do, having a central command—it goes back to the ice storm, and Bob Chiarelli was in command centre in Ottawa when that was on. They learned a lot from that very serious natural event about how to run major catastrophes, we could call them, because it certainly was a catastrophe for many people in the ice storm. But they had central control down at the city of Ottawa, and I really have to say, that regional government showed us a lot of leadership. Bob Chiarelli was the chair of the region at the time. Brian Coburn was involved; he was a member here. But that central command is extremely important. I think that's where we're going, and we'll know how to handle all of these future events a lot better under this new legislation.

The new authority could be used only under limited and specific circumstances. Directives could only be used in instances of an infectious disease outbreak, such as H1N1; environmental health hazards; or public health emergencies. These directives would be in force for up to six months, but they could be terminated earlier if necessary.

There are often times when local public health units would benefit from more clarity and a standardized approach in place when a major health event like the H1N1 pandemic occurs.

We know it's not a question of whether there will be another pandemic; the only question is, "When will it occur?" Diseases know no borders, and Ontario must be in a position to protect its citizens and its health care system.

The H1N1 pandemic was not as severe as it could have been, but the next one could be worse, and that's what we have to prepare for. The minister said in November 2010, "I'm proud of the way Ontario handled the H1N1 pandemic; we learned a lot of lessons. What we are doing today is making sure that Ontario is better prepared for the next pandemic."

Part of making sure we are better prepared is implementing a panorama, a pan-Canadian initiative to improve public health surveillance and enhance the province's capacity to deliver immunization programs and ensure adequate vaccine inventories. The implementation of all these things will allow health care providers to more accurately detect outbreaks of communicable diseases and move to control them sooner.

Having the ability to have an increased level of planning for immunizations allows for a more rapid response in times of pandemic outbreak. Overall, the proposed amendments would strengthen the province's

ability to plan, manage and respond to future pandemics; to provincial, national or international public health events; and/or to other emergencies that affect the health of Ontarians.

You might say, "Why now?" I think this is the proper time to plan. We have had the experience with H1N1 very recently. A lot of consultation has gone into this new legislation. This is the time to make sure that we use all those best practices that we developed through all our communities across the province and to put those into one piece of legislation that's going to direct the proper handling of the next time.

Having the ability to have an increased level of planning for immunization allows for a more rapid response in times of pandemic outbreak. This proposed legislation would add to the many important tools already in place and enhance our response to public health threats.

If the legislation is passed, the CMOH would have the authority to direct boards of health and local medical officers of health to adopt measures during any future public health emergency.

I just heard the discussions regarding the ability of the medical officer of health to be able to take over public buildings. This is important. We have those situations now with the daycares, having a place where they can go if there's a major breakdown. The Legion in Orléans talks about planning so that their facility would be available for community groups and would have backup power and backup water so that they can be part of a civil emergency that we might see.

The proposed legislation is part of this government's larger plan to enhance the way we respond to future public health events or emergencies, which ensures the health of Ontarians and the health of our health care infrastructure.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to provide a couple of minutes of comments to the member for Ottawa—Orléans. I appreciate that he mentioned the ice storm because we in eastern Ontario, back in January 1998, had to deal with some pretty interesting weather, and it caused a lot of issues.

At the time, I was working at the newspaper, and unlike my wife, a reporter who was out working all day, I was involved with the Internet division of the newspaper at the time when the ice storm hit. There wasn't much business in the Internet business when the power was out, so I ended up at home with our kids. At the time, the baby, Caitlin, who's now almost 21, was just about seven; she wasn't eight yet. The other kids were 10 and 11. I remember during the ice storm how many days I could get those kids to have barbecued steak and eggs in a row because I was using whatever I could out of the—

**Interjection:** Eggs?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Yeah, I barbecued the eggs, the toast, the steak—to see how many days I could get the

kids to have steak and eggs before everything was lost in the freezer.

But what happened was some of the things that the member for Ottawa—Orléans talked about: opening up schools, Legions—some municipalities ran out of Legions during that ice storm—health care centres, schools. Everything opened up. We put cots out. We helped each other. We brought generators around. It was a time when everyone banded together to make sure things got done. The things that are being proposed under this bill—some of our folks think they're happening already, that in times of need, things like a pandemic, we can rally the people around.

I can appreciate the intent. Again, my concern is what's not in there. The electronic immunization records aren't there. That's what I'm concerned about.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Ottawa—Orléans, I think, brought this to a very practical level. I think it's a good time to remind ourselves that, if you look back in the 1970s, we've seen emergencies in more than 30 previously unknown diseases associated with bacteria and viruses that have wreaked havoc on the health care system. These include Ebola from 1977; legionnaires' disease, I think, was 1977; hepatitis C in 1989; variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease was in 1996; and the H5N1 influenza A virus or avian flu in 1997, as well as others—as well as SARS.

You're right: This is not a surprise. In fact, SARS was a wake-up call sort of nationally in terms of a response. That's when they came up with the federal Panorama plan. I think that's one thing that should be in here. On a serious note, this should be in the bill. Although the government has made every indication—and the minister's remarks did mention it—that they were sort of working towards that, it should be in here as a requirement because of the way these things move around. As Dr. King said, with today's mobility around the world, it should be command central. It should be a national plan, and that's what I think is important.

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Some of the provisions under the bill, as has been mentioned by the member, are important to be able to, at the will, under the right circumstances—this is what's required: who defines what an emergency is or what an environmental health outbreak is?—but they should have the authority to take and use facilities that are required in parts of Ontario where there aren't often a lot of facilities around. They may have to use private or public to make sure the public are maintained safely. So I think he makes some very good points, and we still have a lot to learn on this particular bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It's always a pleasure to listen to the member from Ottawa—Orléans. He's got a great background. He served with great distinction as a city councillor in the Ottawa area. Of course, he's a professional

engineer by trade and he understands the profession. He understands what the essential elements of this bill, Bill 141, the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act, are: to provide some new powers to the chief medical officer of the province of Ontario, Dr. King. He spent a good deal of his speech this afternoon talking about that.

I'm personally pleased that he announced just recently that he's planning to seek re-election. I know that constituents in every corner of Ottawa–Orléans are going to Mr. McNeely every day and saying, "Phil, we want you to stay. We know the great job you've been doing for the last eight years and we want your leadership to continue." This speech is emblematic, I think, of his kind of leadership in his community talking about Bill 141.

I know he has worked very closely with the MOH in the greater Ottawa area and he knows that it's important to plan for things like a pandemic. He was used for that in his professional career as an engineer: to plan for future activities that may happen. That's exactly what this bill is all about.

The proposed legislation would give the chief medical officer of health enhanced oversight authority to help ensure that Ontario is better coordinated. This new authority would also be used only in limited and specific circumstances, and I think that's very important. There has been some discussion this afternoon that this is a Kremlin-like centralization that's going to happen. That's certainly not going to happen, because we're asking for enhanced powers in a very specific area.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Ottawa–Orléans has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'd like to thank the member for Durham, the member for Peterborough, the member for Leeds–Grenville and the member from Timmins–James Bay for the great amount of insight that he gave us.

I think that what I hear this afternoon is that every member has a lot of confidence in our great communities throughout this province. Certainly, having been raised in Cumberland, near Navan—Navan almost made that Hockeyville thing very recently—Rockland, where the arena is called the Lalonde arena, and Orléans and Carlsbad—those are just some small communities in my part of Ontario. When times are tough, and I guess it's the rural background; you certainly have that—and some of the members have mentioned that, have alluded to that—great strength we have in our communities. So this is not in any way critical of these communities for any of the deficiencies that happened during the H1N1 that I'm aware of.

We look back on the heroics that occurred during the ice storm.

The strength is in our communities. The leadership will come from the top and we'll have the best practices across the provinces, but we certainly can depend on our people, on our communities, on our churches, on our

farmers. They'll be there to make sure that they provide all the hard work that's necessary should another pandemic occur.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to provide a few comments in our remaining time today on Bill 141, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act. I think it was the member for Thornhill who, in the start of his speech, talked about all of the flowery names that the government has given their bills, things like the Good Government Act, and the fact that this is just so plain. I'm not sure; maybe your writer of the fancy titles is probably doing the PowerPoint presentations now, something like that, that the Premier has been out spouting. So you've moved them from giving bills catchy names to putting them out on the road with the Premier.

When I commented on the member for Ottawa–Orléans, I talked about the ice storm and my prowess for making steak and eggs for my kids at the time. When the issue of H1N1 and the pandemic was discussed this time around, I was a CAO of a municipality, the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands. During the time that these issues took place, I was on the front lines in the municipal sector. I can remember like it was yesterday when we did a tabletop exercise. Our municipal staff got together, and we did an actual tabletop exercise that if the pandemic hit our municipality, how would we handle it? I found it fascinating because I'm always very interested in emergency preparedness.

When I was a local mayor, 25 years ago, I remember going to the emergency preparedness college in Arnprior. I remember going a couple of times and dealing with emergency preparedness. I remember our council refining its emergency preparedness manual.

So when I was the CAO and we did this tabletop exercise, it was fascinating. Our deputy fire chief took us through the exercise, and I can remember that I was sick with H1N1 for a couple of days as part of the exercise, some of our staff went down, and we really had to decide how we were delivering our municipal services.

This reminded me of the ice storm, and how people banded together; how we opened up schools, municipal offices, local Legions to the public; how restaurants that could still make food provided it for a massive amount of people. But this tabletop exercise really made me think about, if it did hit to the degree that they thought, how we would be able to cope and decide which services we would provide and which we didn't.

As we all know, it wasn't as bad as what we had thought. Our municipality, I remember, maybe had one person that had taken a couple of days off work because they weren't sure. Obviously, they couldn't get to a hospital to find out whether they had H1N1, so we sent them home.

I remember buying masks. We bought masks for every municipal staffer; I think they cost \$10 or \$20. We all had to get fitted with these masks. I remember that the knowledge was quite high. I remember that fall, as well,

we had to get a lot of hand sanitizer, and that every council meeting we were there. So it really changed the way people thought.

In our community, the CAOs had regular conference calls with the health unit, and I found that at least our health unit, the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville health unit, had to adapt quite quickly. I know that some of the statistics we had were great in terms of being able to adapt. I know that during the first couple of days they had some issues with long lineups for children, and they were able to do a numbering system which greatly relieved the problem.

The one thing they did do right was that they kept referring people back to their website. We didn't seem to have the problems they had in the GTA with region-jumping. Those just weren't there. We didn't have the confusion that was in the area, but we were well aware from the media of the problems that were establishing throughout the province.

I know that my time is rapidly leaving, but again, the point I want to make too is what's not in here. When you look at the medical officer of health, Dr. King—she talked about Panorama, and the reasons why, the critical need. She used the words, "That last point is critical"—that you need those electronic health systems, that you need—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you.

1800

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### DISCLOSURE OF TOXINS

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Timmins–James Bay has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Natural Resources. The member for Timmins–James Bay has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I know that everybody is going to be riveted to their seats as they walk out of the assembly to get to their offices to watch this on television.

All kidding aside, I don't plan on using the full five minutes. I don't expect the parliamentary assistant is going to use the full five minutes, either. There are just a couple of basic issues that we've got to get to.

What we learned last week from the Toronto Star report is that Agent Orange was used by the Ministry of Natural Resources through the 1950s and the 1960s and early 1970s in what they said was Kapuskasing and Hearst. First of all, for the record, if it was used in

Kapuskasing and the Gordon Cosens Forest, I've got to believe it was used across northern Ontario and anywhere else, quite frankly, that the ministry was carrying on spraying programs.

I believe that at the beginning, when all of this started in the 1950s, that the ministry probably didn't know that this was a toxic chemical. I can't believe that the ministry in the 1950s, when they set out to use these chemicals, would have said, "We're going to use this," if they would have known in fact that it was poisonous and it was something that would cause cancer and eventually death in human beings. I want to put that categorically up front. This is not about a witch hunt in regard to trying to besmirch the MNR when it comes to what they thought they were doing was safe and that turned out not to be.

But the big issue here is a simple one: when the ministry did find out in the early 1970s, I would believe, or maybe the late 1960s, that the use of Agent Orange was something that, quite frankly, caused sickness in human beings and caused cancer, as we have found out through the experiences of Vietnam where they used Agent Orange in order to defoliate the jungles of Vietnam so that the Americans and South Vietnamese troops were able better to find the North Vietnamese troops. It was found at that time that Agent Orange caused cancer. The first point that I want the parliamentary assistant to respond to is: When the ministry found out, why didn't they come clean? Why didn't they say to the public of Ontario, as a crown agency or ministry, "Listen, we have just now found out that"—circa 1968, 1970, or whatever year it was—"Agent Orange causes cancer, and anybody who thinks that they may have come in contact with Agent Orange needs to come forward in order to be tested and monitored, and we have to take a look at making sure we do what is right for those who have come into contact."

Instead, from what I can see, the ministry said nothing publicly, and that's what troubles me because we live in a modern democracy, and that modern democracy says that the public has a right to know. In this case the ministry, for whatever reason, did not advise the public when it came to the dangers of being exposed to Agent Orange through the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, when they found out that these chemicals were dangerous. That's the first thing I want to ask the parliamentary assistant and why I'm doing the late show: Why is it that the Ministry of Natural Resources did not make public that these were dangerous chemicals and people who came into contact with this as a result of exposure in the forests of northern Ontario were not advised that that was the case? If the minister can respond to that, I'm sure I will come up with multiple supplementary answers in other question periods to come.

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** Thank you—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Sorry; you have up to five minutes to respond. Go ahead.

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** I appreciate that, and I want to thank the member from Timmins–James Bay for his

question and for the opportunity to provide some further information on a very, very important issue.

I can assure the member that I'm very concerned about this issue. The minister is and our government is, as I am sure all MPPs in this Legislature are, concerned and committed to obtaining all of the facts and all of the information with respect to what transpired during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s around the herbicide spraying program in the province of Ontario, doing that in a way that is open and transparent and ensures that we protect the public health.

I want to thank the former Tembec employee for bringing this forward to the minister's attention as well. In fact, the minister was speaking this past weekend over the telephone with this individual and assured him personally that she will do everything in her power to reach out to those who may have been affected by the herbicide spraying program dating back to the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

To the member opposite: Certainly, as a fellow northerner, I expect answers on this issue and I expect that we're going to get answers on this issue. What I can tell you at this point is that MNR is working with a number of ministries: the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. They are actively working together to gather the information around this particular issue. The minister has created a herbicide project team to lead the cross-government efforts to investigate this particular matter. The minister is also appointing an independent fact-finding panel that will report back and provide information on the issue that the member has raised and that has been discussed publicly over the last number of weeks. Our priority is to ensure that anyone who was exposed to the herbicides 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D through the herbicide spraying program dating back to the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s will get the support they need and will get the information that they need.

We are also concerned about not only the MNR employees and anybody who is currently working with the MNR or is a past MNR employee, but individuals who may have been working in the private sector in the area or any other citizens who may have been in the area with respect to these programs taking place during this time period. We want anyone out there in the province of Ontario who thinks that they may have been impacted by this to get the necessary information and to come forward. I'm going to provide some further information on that in a second.

As the member is aware, or should be aware as well, the minister has also directed that this information be

posted on MNR websites regarding herbicide use during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, as well as steps that former employees, private sector individuals or any other individuals can take if they believe that they've been affected by this.

I should also say for the record, and as the member is aware, that the federal government, through Health Canada, regulates the use of herbicides in our country, and I can tell you that MNR stopped using this particular herbicide in 1979, about 32 years ago, six years before the federal government put in place, in 1985, a ban on the use of these herbicides in the province of Ontario.

MNR has also been in contact with WSIB, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and it's their role to review all work claims related to the occupational disease component.

What I'd like to provide at this point as well are a couple of numbers for the benefit of the public and all members. MNR has established a toll-free line for the general public so that anyone with any information about the use of the spray program can contact us. The number is 1-888-338-3364. It's available on a number of ministry websites, and that's for the general public. As the member knows, the numbers around the WSIB occupational disease information line are 416-344-4440 or toll-free at 1-800-387-0750. We want to make sure that anyone who has information about this or believes they may have been affected has the ability to come forward.

I want to say to the member opposite that I represent a riding in northern Ontario, as does the member, and unfortunately we can't go back and change the past on this particular issue, but I want to assure the member and all members of this House that we want to do everything possible to get this information to anyone that has been affected. I can certainly say that if any of my family members were involved in this, we'd want to make sure that they have the information, just as we want to make sure that any member of the general public or any past employee of MNR or anyone working in this sector has the information they need, and that we have the ability to provide the appropriate responses and get them the attention that they need with respect to this.

Again, our government continues to take steps to address this and to ensure that all Ontarians are made aware of what we learn in an open and transparent process.

I want to thank the member for raising the issue today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1810.*

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Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
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Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, P.C., Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
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Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
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<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth-Wellington	
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Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
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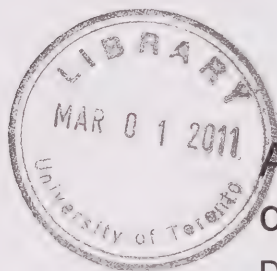


N° 84

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament



**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 23 February 2011**

**Mercredi 23 février 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 23 February 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 23 février 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Baha'i prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### INTERIM SUPPLY

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments relating to the legislative offices pending the voting of supply for the period commencing February 23, 2011, and ending on March 31, 2011, such payments to be charged to the proper appropriation for the 2010-11 fiscal year following the voting of supply.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 52. Debate?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Today we are debating our motion on interim supply. It's not typical that we would actually debate the motion. However, it would seem that my friends in the third party are feeling a lack of practice, having just come back from the break, so for the member for Timmins-James Bay and possibly the member for Welland, we will give them an opportunity to wind themselves up this morning.

An interim supply motion can authorize spending for up to six months. This motion is specific to the Legislative Assembly offices and covers a period of less than two months, from February 23 to March 31, 2011.

Spending authority is required from February 23, 2011, until the passage of the Supply Act. Without spending authority, most scheduled and unscheduled payments, such as salaries and wages or suppliers' accounts, cannot be paid. This motion would give government continuous legislative authority to make payments for the legislative offices. It does not authorize any additional expenditures beyond the 2010 budget and the 2010-11 estimates.

I want to assure the House that the motion before the Legislature does not authorize any additional expenditures—the maximum amount of expenditures under the motion of interim supply as set out and authorized in the Supply Act.

It is also important to note that the legislative offices' expenditures are not over their budget. The current spending is actually under the amount of the 2010 Ontario bud-

get. Current spending of the legislative offices is covered by the Interim Appropriation for 2010-2011 Act, 2009, and the Supplementary Interim Appropriation Act, 2010. This authority, however, is not sufficient to cover the legislative offices' required expenditures until the end of the fiscal year, and that is why we're here this morning debating this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak to this motion and to set the table for the ongoing debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that accommodation as well.

I've been wishing to speak on the supply motion, which allows the government to pay the bills. I'm not surprised that I'm a bit concerned whether they have the resources to pay the bills. I'm actually waiting for the budget; that Mr. Duncan, the Minister of Finance, will come in and tell us we have a deficit in the order of \$20 billion. So I am concerned.

But I'm more specifically concerned—Mr. Speaker, you would know as well—that they made a commitment, a promise, to hold the line on spending. Now, not to say that the public sector is not deserving of the pay and remuneration they get. They are. I don't in fact have any dispute with that. But when you have a boss, which would be the McGuinty government, that is spending money faster than there is revenue coming in, they're putting everyone at risk; not just the civil servants of Ontario but the people of Ontario, the families. They've got to learn to be fair with everyone.

If I look around at what causes these collapses in the economy, it's mismanagement, squarely on the shoulders of the Premier and his cabinet—not so much on some of the members here this morning. They're not in cabinet; what do they know? They get the notes to read, and that's as far as it goes.

I will say this: One of the major policy areas where they have completely failed is the energy file. You see it in its evidence when you open up that energy bill in your house. You open up that bill, and you're shocked. Not only that, you're frightened and you feel abused—because Premier McGuinty's energy plan for Ontario is simple.

We—Tim Hudak—say that conservation is the first and most important policy step they can take. Conservation would give consumers and families the right tools, like Energy Star appliances. They should get a tax credit

on those. That was Tim Hudak's plan. Premier McGuinty cancelled it.

Their conservation plan is that they make electricity so expensive that you'll have to conserve; you'll actually have to turn off appliances. That's the plan. It's a very simple plan: They charge you so much that you can't afford to watch television or dry your clothes during the week; you have to do it on the weekend, on Sunday when the rates are lower.

Here's the other one: The Green Energy Act is the biggest misguided—we're in favour of renewable energy. First, conservation; second, renewable resources, and third, making the system more intelligent. Now, I'm going to talk a bit about the energy file because—Mr. Speaker, you would know this—in an economy the most important input cost is energy. Ontario was founded on a policy from way back 100 years ago. Sir Adam Beck's policy was safe, reliable and—here's the key word—affordable power. In fact, his phrase was “power at cost.” “Power at any cost” is what he meant, because they actually supported industry by having a cheap energy policy. That is kind of how it ran. Whether it's steel, forestry, the pulp and paper industry, the auto sector, the petrochemical sector—all those sectors rely on safe, reliable, affordable power.

What have we got today? We've got safe. I think OPG and Hydro One generally do a safe job; that's not the question. Reliable? We saw a couple of schools in Toronto closed yesterday—supply of energy. Affordable? We saw the big Beck tunnel in Niagara Falls, almost a \$1-billion boondoggle. We see the whole thing on solar power: the microFIT program, paying 80 cents per kilowatt hour and then selling it for 5 or 6 cents. Who in their right mind would have done that? Since you're paying 80 cents and selling it for 5 or 6 cents, who is paying for it? Who is paying for that? The taxpayer is paying for it.

*Interjection.*

0910

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Northumberland is barking over there. He's saying right here in the House that he's in support of wind energy. That's what he's saying. He's in support of that. That will be another large problem for the province of Ontario, especially in Northumberland—Quinte West. I think that he's listening to the wrong people, because—even in the city of Kawartha Lakes, I would say the member from up in that area isn't listening to the people as well. He would know that—I'm just looking up his name. Rick Johnson, the member from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, isn't listening to his constituents on this whole issue around industrial wind turbines of two and three megawatts, 200 or 300 feet from someone's house. There is medical evidence that—Dr. McMurtry, the dean of medicine from the University of Western Ontario, says that it constitutes a health hazard.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Now they're saying over there that it doesn't matter. People matter. Stop and get it right.

That's all I'm saying to you on this file. Take your time. What's the rush here?

Everyone's in favour of replacing the coal plant. In fact, I was there when the Lakeview plant was closed. It was the first and only coal plant closed in Ontario. They have shut down some of the furnaces at Nanticoke, but they have not closed the plant, and they're not going to close it. Mr. Speaker, you would know that, and you know how much trouble you got into from wind energy down in your area.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes; it's offshore. They backtracked on that. They knew it was a problem. Freshwater, offshore wind power—they knew it was a problem. What did they do? They cancelled them. Now they're in court, and they're going to pay all kinds of liability costs on that file.

Ever since Brad Duguid took over this file, it has been completely—he's in Scarborough somewhere in his riding, and he's in trouble, too. He's from Scarborough Centre. I think that's why they cancelled the offshore wind. It's like with Kevin Flynn; they cancelled the gas plant. I understand that. It's called “save cabinet at any price.” That's the plan.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Not at all.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no, he's priceless. He's a very decent person. I think the world of Kevin, but he may not be here in a few months. But that's another—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a risky game that we're in. But they did their best to save his seat by moving that Oakville gas generator. They moved it.

Here's the issue: This thing is just unravelling on them. When you look at it, they move it from Oakville. Where are they moving it? They're moving it to my good friend Mr. Martiniuk's—Cambridge is where they're moving it to.

Who got the contract? When you cancelled the one in Oakville—they have made a secret deal, I believe. I'm on my own on this. I'm saying this on my own, but I'm quite intuitive. It's a secret deal of cancelling the plant, and the company that's going to build it is TransCanada Pipelines. TransCanada Pipelines, without any RFP or RFQ being done—a secret single source, another broken promise by Premier McGuinty, who promised not to have any of these sole-source searching—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I know I've touched a nerve, and I know they're upset because we've uncovered some of the secret, questionable transactions. I can only tell you this: The evidence is clear that this file is in complete dishevelment, or whatever the word would be. He has completely ruined the energy file.

I would say that the next and most important thing in the limited time I have—I wish I had a full hour, but they've cut it to 40 minutes. I've been following the important change of heart in transit. Transit is a very important file, and the reason this all ties back to this interim supply motion is because they have to approve

the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments relating to the legislative offices pending the voting of supply for the period commencing today, February 23, and ending on March 31, such payments to be charged to the proper appropriation for the 2010-11 fiscal year following the vote of supply. And that just brings them through the fiscal year.

That's fine, but one of the largest single areas of the economy being in such a devastating condition here—they've lost 300,000 jobs. They keep saying that they've created jobs; they haven't created any jobs. These guys who are building the solar panels and the wind turbines—when the wind turbines are up and the solar panels are up, there are no jobs there. These people will be in the unemployment line.

The Second Career program is another example of a failed plan. They're training people and there are no jobs. If you read any of the stuff, less than half of the people who have spent all this money and put their families at risk haven't got jobs. The most important thing for dignity in this society is to give a person an opportunity and the right to work to earn their legitimacy in life, if you will.

I see in my own riding people afraid to turn on the lights because of the cost of electricity. They're unable to go to the simplest kind of entertainment because the HST is charged on everything. Even if you had an accident and you're taking physiotherapy, there's tax on that now. Everything that moves or breathes is taxed at 13%. And they've got other taxes in mind. The energy file is actually a tax, because it's non-discretionary consumption—in other words, you have to have electricity, and now it's taxed, so it's non-discretionary consumption; it's taxed at 13%. Every service—even when you do your income tax this year, it's going to be taxed. That's a fact. To get your income tax done, it's going to be taxed, because it is a service; it's going to be taxed 13%. Everything you do in the family—you register the children in sports, it's taxed; in recreation programs, taxed; physical fitness programs, taxed—unbelievable, the greed of that one tax. The HST is a symptom that they have a spending problem.

What they have to have—a good start would be to have a little respect for the taxpayer, for the hard-working families. They feel the grip around their necks, it's that bad. They feel impaled, crippled, impugned, whatever. They feel helpless under the pressure of unrelenting tax, getting into every pocket and opening in their body that might have money in it. They just can't wait to get their hands on your money.

I can understand—I want to go back to first principles here. I appreciate the work that's done. My wife was a teacher; my daughter is a teacher; I have two sisters who are nurses. These are critically important functions in society that are highly respected and highly valued. I was at a clinic in Port Perry last week, Medical Associates of Port Perry, for the commissioning of a new CT scanner. Doctors there work collaboratively as a team and the health care system is working. But here's the problem: Every hospital in my riding, including the member from

Peterborough—every single hospital in this province has a deficit.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** No—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Peterborough is yelling. They've had to lay off some 66 nurses.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** You can get up in your rebuttal.

They've laid off 60-some nurses and they paid about \$3 million in severance—and they already had about a \$6-million deficit.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** We're in a surplus position, John.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I would say you should stand and put that on the record, because clearly, from everything I know, people on the foundation and everything else, there are signs all over town: "Jeff Leal, stand up for your hospital." That makes me worry. The signs are down—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Durham, I've been a little lax this morning. There have been some names used. We don't use the names of members; we only use their ridings, please.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With the member from Peterborough, I respect what he's trying to do there, but I still believe that all hospitals in the province of Ontario are in debt. All children's aids are in deficit. Every function in this province of Ontario is in deficit. Not some, all. They're all in deficit.

I'm going to look at one more thing. I know they don't want to hear it. I'm using this from the *Globe and Mail*, an article on revisiting the transit blueprint. This is worth reading. This is a recent article. First of all, Metrolinx is kind of a manager, if you will, an unelected board. I've met with—Rob MacIsaac was there for a while, and now they have Dr. Rob Prichard. He was the president of U of T., a nice fellow. I went to U of T some time ago.

**0920**

The key here is that Rob Prichard and the president—what's his name—did a deal with a Japanese company, Sumitomo Corp.—I think it's a division of Samsung—and spent \$53 million buying these low-particulate-matter diesel trains, with a commitment to buy more of them.

The issue here is electrification of the transit system—these are diesel. So they've made this commitment, and now they've agreed that they are going to electrify that. Bruce McCuaig is the other fellow; he's the president of Metrolinx. The government has intervened and interfered with—not a competitive bid, no RFP, no RFQ, nothing. They just did a deal with this Japanese company. Why wouldn't they use Bombardier, Siemens—one of our companies where our constituents work? No, they always go to Samsung: \$7 billion to help us with our renewable energy. Get a life. We've got some of the best universities in the world right here: UOIT, Trent University. I can't believe it.

Anyway, I met this morning with a few people at AUTO21, and they were concerned about the economy as well. I don't know that the ministry even met with them. How is that? We've got the innovation community, AUTO21—these are the innovators for the auto sector—

and a lot of the manufacturing sector. I had a few names I wanted to mention, but I've only got one card here, for some reason or other. This is Peter Frise, a Ph.D. in engineering, with AUTO21, and another couple of young engineers that I met.

Here's my point: I don't believe they are not working strongly enough with our Ontario industries. In this particular case, they are going to electrify each of these diesel rail cars they are going to buy. The reason for this quick sale and electrification issue is that they want to get it in before the Pan American Games in 2015. That's the deal. That's why this artificial date—this two-week event, the Pan American Games—so this train that goes to the airport would be electrified. Well, they are going to waste, I would say, \$200 or \$300 million—I'm putting that on the record here—more than that, actually, absolutely wasted.

We had the eHealth example of \$1 billion. Can you now go to a medical clinic and give them your card and get your record or the tests you've had pulled up on the screen? No, you can't. Where is the money going?

Now, in the energy file we have an even deeper, more troubling problem: the debt retirement charge. When they restructured Ontario Hydro, the debt retirement charge was set to be about \$21 billion.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The House leader on the other side is squawking away, and that's fine. I know she's not running again because she probably realizes that time is up.

Here is the issue, though: \$7.8 billion was set aside as residual stranded debt, and it's reported in the public accounts on the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** What year?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It was done in 2002-03. Now, this is important—she's engaged, she's listening; this is good. Each year on your electricity bill, you pay .07 cents per kilowatt hour. Look it up. It's on there; it's a line. It's the debt retirement charge: .07 cents per kilowatt hour. Each person—your family pays about \$10 to \$15 a month, roughly \$100 a year. It could be more, but \$100 a year is good—plus HST; they get the HST on top. So it's a little over \$100 a month that you're paying on that.

Since 2002 to the end of 2009-2010, you had paid back \$7.8 billion collectively. She may have a different point of view; she's entitled to get up and speak. So \$7.8 billion has been paid off. But now, surprisingly, they've extended this debt retirement charge to 2018. They may dispute whether it's paid off or not paid off. This is a more complex issue. The remaining portion of the debt after the restructuring was basically set aside because it was going to be paid back by Hydro One and the other utilities, because this was the spreading out of how much the assets could create revenue. Some of the assets with Hydro One, the transmission system and the distribution system, as well as with OPG, the generation system, were assets that could generate capital; revenue to pay off the debt. This was the residual stranded debt.

What we're calling for? Our leader, Tim Hudak, is calling for a forensic audit. It's a fair compromise. We're not trying to—I just think it's one more example on this file and the finances of Ontario. They've increased spending beyond the rate of growth in the economy. They have almost destroyed the energy system completely, because these 20-year contracts on the feed-in tariffs are future debt. Don't ever, by any means—that's future debt. It's a commitment by the taxpayers of Ontario. And what are the taxpayers telling me in my riding? They can't take it anymore.

All the laudable objectives are one thing. The deception of all this is, how are they going to pay for it? The only choice here to pay off this accumulated debt and squandering of resources is to increase taxes. Well, they've already hit the tax ceiling, in my view, whether it's taxes when you drive your car, auto insurance, tuition for students, registering kids in fitness programs. Everything is taxed to the max.

Now there's a new tax hiding until after the next election; it's called the eco tax. Every battery that you've ever used, every electronic appliance you've ever used, is going to be taxed, either at consumption or at disposal. Probably both. So if you have any old television stuff sitting around, get rid of it now, because I'll tell you: Right after the election, if they happen to be elected, it's going to be taxed. It will be taxed on disposal and on purchase of your new one.

There's nothing that they won't tax. In fact, if I look at it, they have raised taxes in health care. They called it the health tax. It's about \$1,200 a year—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Oh, but you're keeping it.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** They don't know—don't even bother listening anymore. Now they're saying different things.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** No, you are.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I asked Sylvia Jones about that one.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order. The member for Peterborough.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** They have delisted a number of services. That means you're paying for it out of your pocket. Not only that, this is—it's quite tragic, really.

They have a war going on with the pharmacists. The Ministry of Health says, "Oh, it's all resolved." No, no; it's not resolved at all. Now either you can't get drugs or you have to buy the patent drug, which is twice as expensive. Some of the drugs you can't get.

I think one of the areas that they've done quite well on—they've invested a lot—is the whole idea of full-day learning. I would say this on the full-day learning: It's universally taxed. We're all paying for it. It's about a billion and a half a year. When fully implemented, it'll be over \$3 billion. That's just the operating side, plus they've got to build more classroom space.

Now what is doing it? The wrong people are delivering the program. Not only that; not everybody in Ontario can avail themselves of it. Some of these three- and four-year-olds cannot ride on a bus when they live in Timmins

or some other area that's not Toronto. It's fine, probably great, for Toronto.

In fact, I have two daughters that have children; our grandchildren. We have five now. We're going to have seven here by October, I guess. I'm getting busier all the time—at least certainly my wife is. I'm great at playing games with them, I guess. I take them skiing; I do say that. Two of them are old enough now, four and seven: Meghan and Daniel. I've taken them a few times.

But the point I'm saying is, this idea of the full-day learning isn't fairly or equitably distributed. Some families cannot get this service. In fact, it's going to be after the next election before some of them will be able to get it. That's simply not fair. This is all I want. Families in Ontario want to be treated fairly. That's all we're asking. Take the foot off their throat or off their chest, ease off on the spending a bit, quit making all these reckless promises. Treat people with respect, as opposed to assuming that they're just another function of your tax policy: Get them working so you can tax them.

0930

Young people today, in the future of Ontario—I'm questioning what the jobs of the future are. Not everyone can be a university professor or a highly qualified nurse; not everyone can do that. We need to have jobs for families and jobs for the young people. I look at these pages here today who are new; they'll be introduced today, I think. That is the most exciting opportunity for them.

I think it's people first. That's the function of government. We are elected at the will of our constituents, and the Premier at the will of the province. People just want to be treated respectfully and with dignity.

That means quit taking every measly cent you can out of their pockets. Give them some of the choices in life, whether they want to have daycare or they want to have another—give them tax relief for certain expenditures, for child care. Some people work shift work. Some of these programs are designed for everybody who works for the government. How about the people who are working in a steel plant who are on shift work? They may want daycare at a different time of the day. They may even have it on the weekends or in the summer.

These programs aren't designed for today's economy; it's sort of 7-24. And a lot of the economy of the future—I have a couple of children who are lawyers and have a master's degree and all these kinds of things. Some of them actually have quite good jobs here in Toronto, and they actually work at home a day or two a week. My son is legal counsel for Procter and Gamble Canada. He does pretrial discovery hearings and that online.

So your future won't be getting on some GO Transit bus, riding for an hour and a half to get to some bank tower in Toronto to do financial transactions. That's baloney. In 20 years, you'll be doing it from some remote office, probably in your home. All that transit stuff we're talking about, I don't see a vision, and I don't see a plan where they put people first, and the changes in the economy.

I worked for the auto sector for 31 years, mostly on the computer side, personnel side and production. That's the three different types of careers I had: a computer programmer at the beginning; personnel is the labour relations area; and my last 10 years basically was in production. Those jobs, unfortunately, may not exist in the future. Countries like Mexico and China and Brazil and those kinds of economies will probably have a lower wage factor—for the short term, mind you—and we have to be innovative about the economy of the future. For young people, my children—we have five children, and we have seven grandchildren coming up—it's a knowledge-based economy, a global economy.

One of the best books that I've read recently is Friedman's book called *Hot, Flat and Crowded*. It's Friedman's book, absolutely mandatory reading about the future economy.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** He's a right-wing nut.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, it's true. It's talking about the globalization of the economy, "hot" meaning global warming, "flat" meaning the technology, and "crowded" meaning the population. Right now there are about 5.5 billion people in the world. When there's about seven billion, there's not going to be enough stuff—water and air. That's the number the demographers use: At about seven billion there are going to be shortages of all the resources we use. Water will be scarce. Gas, we're almost at peak oil now. If you read the book on peak oil, it will tell you that those things will become more and more expensive as more and more people want them.

The emerging economies need that chance. They need that chance to grow their economies. We can't be greedy and take all the resources for North Americans' consumption. I think it is important that we have a globalized approach to resolving these resource-sharing issues. In fact, they are big issues.

But what troubles me most of all, when I look at this interim supply motion and why the House leaders had to come up with some way of paying the bills, or at least to be debated—we felt it was a good time to reflect. Our House leader, John Yakabuski, the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, made it clear to us—and our leader, Tim Hudak—that we've got to make everything focus back on the family's ability to pay. I support that. Being a person of average means myself, and my family and my constituents in Durham, I feel very much the same.

Let's put it in perspective. We shouldn't be making a lot of cuts, but we shouldn't be making promises about more because that's future debt on these children. In fairness, any fool can promise you anything, but "is it being disingenuous" is the question that should be asked. I question those who promise things. It's like someone who has a drug problem or something. They're impaired in their thinking of what they can do. It's unfair to be dishonest with our youth, because if you're spending more than you're earning, pretty soon you're going to be bankrupt. And what's that doing for our collective future?

I'm concerned now—the evidence is pretty well together; we had a briefing last week—that they will have doubled the public debt. I think the debt is around \$15,000 or \$20,000 per person. Now, some investments are worthwhile. Investments in knowledge and the economy and that kind of thing are very important investments. Health care, of course, is about 40% of the budget.

Here's how I look at it, in summary. I'm trying to summarize this a bit because this is about paying the bills and the interim supply motion. Right now, the government's budget is about \$115 billion. This is important. That's our own purpose spending, health care being about 41% of that. Education and post-secondary education: Remember, we have the highest tuition already so there's not a lot more room to move there. The students can hardly afford to get the education they need to get the job—the lawyer, the accountant, the scientist.

The OMA is advertising on the radio and television now. Why? The Ontario Medical Association is afraid. Their budget numbers for the last—this is true, as well; I was assistant to the Minister of Health for, I think, four years. The average spending increases annually in health care are 6% to 7%. Their last financial statement was 3%. Health care spending—doctors, nurses and front-line health care workers—is 78% of their total payroll in a hospital, wages and benefits, so if you don't give them the money they're going to have to lay people off. I want that on the record, and I want people to hold me accountable because that's what they're doing.

This is a postdated cheque till after the election, and then they'll say, "Oh, we've got this problem, Houston. We've got to raise taxes."

The whole budget is \$115 billion. Listen up, here: That doesn't include the off-book debt. WSIB, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, has—listen up—\$12 billion in debt over and above the \$20 billion.

Winding up here, I'm just going to wrap it all up: You take the electricity debt, the WSIB debt, their own debt, the budget is about \$120 billion. About 25% of all spending is debt. This is not sustainable. The families of Ontario should know it and be worried about it because Premier McGuinty has taken this province down the wrong path.

I'd love to be able to promise more but I should not deceive the people. I should at least tell them how I'm going to pay for it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time I have left.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm going to use this time to do a couple of things, one of them to actually speak to the motion on interim supply to the Legislative Assembly and speak to that in some degree. Before I go there, I want to speak to a couple of things that I think need to be addressed by the board, and some members may take some exception to it but nonetheless I just want to put some of that on the record. I also want to speak in the broader terms of what interim supply allows us to do.

First of all, just so people understand what we're talking about, this is the estimates to be approved for the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly is run by an organization called the Board of Internal Economy and that Board of Internal Economy is made up of, I believe, three or four government members and a member from each of the opposition parties and the Speaker. The thing that you have to glean out of what I just said is that the board is actually controlled by the government.

**0940**

I just want to say that one of the reasons that we find ourselves here today, very late in the process of the estimates, because the estimates, as far as interim supply—this should have been dealt with a long time ago. The reason that we're here today is that I believe the board is somewhat dysfunctional. I think what happens is that every government, in this case the Liberal government, tries to micromanage the board. They think that there is some kind of conspiracy to everything that comes before the board, so therefore it has to meet with much, much scrutiny. We have these big long processes of discussion, of meetings, of briefings, of more meetings and more briefings and more meetings in order to try to deal with things that are pretty straightforward.

I would not argue for a second that the board should not take its responsibility seriously when it comes to scrutinizing the expenses of the Legislative Assembly and making sure that we get the best value per dollar. That is not my argument. I think that is a given. I think all members of the board, New Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals, all have that in mind. But I think where it falls dysfunctional is in the way that the board is structured.

If you look at our friends in Ottawa—and you have some friends in Ottawa, I'm sure, Speaker, as I do—they have a much different process when it comes to how their Board of Internal Economy functions. What they do there, which I think is very smart, is they have a Board of Internal Economy that is made up of one representative from each of the recognized parties. That allows every caucus, Conservative, NDP, Bloc, Liberal, in the federal House of Commons—and Reform when they were there—to take ownership and responsibility for decisions taken at the board. Because the structure that we have now is that the government is afraid that, no matter what happens at the board, they'll wear it, because they have the majority on the board, and I think I understand. What I would say up front is I understand why the government feels that way, because in fact they are the majority on the board and if something passes that is controversial, even if the opposition voted for the motion with the government, it's the government that's going to wear it because they're the people who have a majority on the board. Therefore, they could have stopped or allowed to have happen whatever it was proposed at the board.

So I just want to put on the record that I think there needs to be reform to how the board is actually structured. I've always suggested at the board itself, and I suggest it here in the Legislature today, that I think we need

to amend the act. I think we need to change how the board is structured so that you really can have decision-making in which all of the three parties are engaged and have ownership of when it comes to the decisions made at the board. That way, if you make a decision, whatever it might be: about members' budgets as far as how much money you've got to run your constituency office; if we decide to do renovations in the building, as we have done before; or we decide to deal with the security budgets in regard to how security is maintained here at the Legislature, all of those issues, then each of the caucuses would have to look very specifically at what it means and understand that if they vote yea or nay—it doesn't matter which way they would vote—they would own ownership of that vote and would be accountable, I think, much more than they are today.

Therefore, I propose—and I'm not doing it as far as a motion today, but I propose as we come back after the next election, those of us who are fortunate enough to come back, we should really seriously look at changing how the board is structured so that really, you have a board that is there for the benefit of members and benefit of the assembly; so that we can make some rational decisions and not political decisions about how this place operates.

I've sat on the board longer than anybody else in this assembly. I've been sitting on the board since about 1993. That makes me the veteran in this assembly on the board. I can tell you, I've seen boards run by the government under New Democrats, I've seen it under Conservatives and I've seen it under Liberals. There's been some difference about how the board is operated between all three governments, but that underlying fear that the government has that whatever decision they make, pro or con, is going to come back to haunt them is what really drives decisions at the board, and I don't think that's the way that we should do business.

For example, one of the things that the Board of Internal Economy does and one of the things that we're approving in the estimates today, through this interim supply motion, is constituency budgets. There are some legitimate arguments that have been put forward by members of this assembly. Conservatives, Liberals and New Democrats have spoken to me or have sent letters to board members to deal with issues within their constituencies. I'm not going to get into discussions we had at the board, because that would not be the right thing to do, as far as who said what, but I want to speak to some of those issues so that members of the assembly understand why it is that we need to do this particular reform.

Members of this assembly have constituency offices. Some of them find themselves in a very difficult spot. Their rents have gone up because of rents just normally going up and their budgets have not kept the pace. Yes, there's been an adjustment for CPI on rents. I think the CPI adjustment, if I remember correctly, is about 1.1%. But members over the years have been trying to make do in constituency offices where the rents have gone up way beyond the CPI. Therefore, they're having a hard time

trying to make ends meet. Then they have to pay their heat and their hydro, and the heat and the hydro have gone up and there's not been an increase for that. Added on to all of that, there's an HST.

The point is, many members find themselves in a position of not really having the amount of money that they need to properly serve their constituents, so they're having to make decisions such as I had to make, which is to lay off a staff member. It really came down to that in my budget where I come from, where I run, in Kapuskasing and Timmins: I had to lay off my halftime person because I can't afford to pay her. She left my employ sometime early in the fall. It is at the point where rents have gone up, wages have gone up, everything has gone up and the budgets have not kept pace with that. As a result, you're having to lay off staff.

Some people will say, "Too bad, so sad, Bisson. That's just the decisions you got to make when you're a manager." I understand that, and I'm not asking for any treatment for any member in this assembly that would be different from what our friends in the private sector or our friends in the public sector would have to deal with. But they at least live in a system that is a bit more rational than what we live in under the Board of Internal Economy. For years, members have been going to the board, under New Democrats, under Conservatives and under Liberals, to properly address the issue of constituency budgets so that when the constituent walks into our offices, the lights are on, the heat has been paid, the computers are plugged in and you have adequate staffing to be able to respond to the needs of your constituent. In some cases it's more expensive to run those services because of the geography of those ridings. There are ridings in southern Ontario, and certainly there are those in northern Ontario, where it is almost impossible to provide the services that one needs to do, as a result of the budget.

I'll give you an example. I'll give you three ridings that I know well. One is mine, Timmins-James Bay. To be able to do the work that has to be done in that riding as far as properly staffing it and being able to have a presence in the communities where constituents have particular things to do, there is not enough money to do that. Is it fair to those constituents, compared to somebody who lives in a downtown Toronto riding or a downtown Sudbury riding? If I was in the riding of Sudbury, I would get essentially about \$20,000 less than what I get in Timmins-James Bay. But you can go anywhere in that riding in the same day, you have only one constituency office that you have to maintain and you get essentially the same budget as somebody who has a large geographical riding such as Timmins-James Bay, Algoma-Manitoulin, Thunder Bay-Superior North or Kenora-Rainy River. Is that right?

Yes, I know the members of the government will come and say, "There's a geographic adjustment in your budget already," and they're right; it's about \$20,000 a year. But certainly to God, we have to have a rational discussion at the board about what is adequate when it

comes to supporting the needs of constituents in those ridings—Liberal, Conservative or NDP. It's not the issue of partisan politics. The issue is, does a resident living in a large geographic riding have the same right to be able to see his or her MPP and deal with their constituency staff on issues that are important to them that somebody has who lives in an urban riding? I think the answer is yes. But we have not had and have been able to have, a rational decision at the board about how we deal with that.

Oh, yes, they all come to me, and I'm sure they go to the Liberal members of the board and the Conservative members of the board and they say, "Oh, God, can you do something for me? I'm with you, Gilles. I'm with you, Elizabeth" or Monique or whoever. "We're with you to make changes." But the reality is, government members aren't about to stand up and become a target within their own caucus on issues around the board when the Premier and the cabinet and people at the Board of Internal Economy say, "No, don't stand up and don't talk about these things, because at the end of the day these are losers for us politically."

I think, hence, there's the problem. You need to have a board that is structured so there is a representative from each party that is recognized in this House, that we have a rational discussion so that a member of the assembly, be it an independent member or a member from any of the caucuses, can bring an issue to the board and have a fair hearing so that the issue is at least dealt with and it's not dismissed out of hand.

0950

One of the issues that came to the board and has been coming to the board for some time is that members have to travel to neighbouring ridings to attend meetings. For example, for me it's not an issue. In my riding, if there's a meeting it's somewhere in my riding, because it's big enough that you're not going to go anywhere else. If there is a CCAC meeting or a meeting of the health unit or a meeting of some sort of regional organization that provides funding to the communities that I represent, it's either based in Timmins, Kap or Hearst. Those are all in my riding, so it's not an issue for me. But imagine you are the member in downtown Toronto and you hold a riding such as my friend Mr. Murray, who is in—what riding is yours?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Toronto Centre.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Toronto Centre. Somebody calls and says, "Listen, I really want my MPP to come to a meeting that has to do with health services in my community," and the meeting is, let's say, for some reason five ridings over, which is, quite frankly, what normally happens. He cannot expense that as a travel allotment for mileage, or if he has to pay a fee to get into a particular conference five ridings over he cannot expense that, and I don't think that's right. I think the member should be allowed to do what has to be done to represent his riding. If the meeting is five or seven ridings over or one riding over, it's up to him to justify to his constituents every four years if he was doing his job right. If he went to

represent a health interest or an economic development issue in his riding at some conference or some meeting that took place outside his riding, he should be allowed to expense that.

We've been trying to deal with this at the board for, God, it's got to be at least two years. Each and every time this issue comes up before the board, the government basically digs in its heels and gets into all kinds of discussions about how that is somehow giving some member an advantage. Tell me how it's an advantage when you get called to a meeting five ridings over at 7 o'clock at night on a Thursday. You'd rather be at home with your family if you had a choice, so don't tell me it's some sort of great advantage. When you go to these things, people actually expect you to do some work and they actually expect you to do some follow-up. The member is not benefiting financially in any kind of way; the member is going to do their job.

Another example is the members down in the southwestern region of the province or the eastern parts of the province. If I was in a riding somewhere north of Kingston, the CCAC services I believe are in Kingston, or some of them may be overlapping into Ottawa. You may have to go to the regional capital in order to go meet with the regional organization that provides services in your riding and you're not a regional capital member. I would think that would be the case for Mr. Clark when it comes to Leeds–Grenville, I believe his riding is. I'm sure there are meetings about services in his riding that are taking place in Kingston or in Ottawa. He is not allowed, as the member for Leeds–Grenville, to get in his car and drive there, expense it at the 42 or 43 cents that we get for mileage, and if he has to pay a fee to get into the meeting because there's a fee charged, and sometimes those things happen—it's like a conference that they ask us to come to in order to find out what's going on on a particular issue that's important in your riding—he could not expense it. I don't think that's right. I think he should be allowed to expense it. But again, why can't we deal with this? Because the structure of the board is completely dysfunctional as far as serving the needs of the members.

I just say, here are two examples—constituency budgets, and here's another example in regard to members' travel—that are really issues we've tried to deal with at the board and can't because of the way the board is structured. I would say, just as I end on this particular issue, that I believe that the solution to the problem is to change the board's structure. To do that we need a change in the act that would say that we will change the structure so that one member from each of the recognized parties be named to the Board of Internal Economy and approved by this House so that we then, as members, can sit down collectively and figure out how to deal with this. Because then I'll tell you what's going to happen: If, let's say, a Conservative, NDP or Liberal member comes to me as the NDP member of the board and says, "I want you to deal with an issue," I had better do my homework and make sure that first of all, I understand what the issues are, but I'm going to have to own the decision.

Therefore, there's going to be some discussion with the Conservatives and Liberals about how should we deal with this particular issue? With a mind to the public purse, is this money that we can afford to spend, yes or no? With a mind to the politics of the issue—because maybe all three political parties are going to think, "Well, that's not a very good idea. If we do that, we'll be seen as self-serving, so maybe we shouldn't do it." But we would at least be able to start having some rational decisions.

On the board issue—I'll just end on this particular issue and that is that of members' pensions. You all know in this Legislature that we have a huge pension—

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** They're all laughing. Exactly.

Back in 1996, one Mike Harris came to the assembly with a piece of legislation that stripped what they called the gold-plated members' pension. Here's what the pension was—it was a very good pension, a very rich pension; I admit that freely. We had a pension that was similar to that of our federal counterparts. The reason that was put in place was that if somebody decides to quit their career—let's say they're in a law office or they have their own business or whatever—and run for Parliament, and they do it for five, 10, 15 years, they would continue accruing some type of pension so that when they go to retire they're not penalized for those years they've left where they were at, where they were getting a real pension.

So at the time, some years ago, a pension was devised for the assembly, and yes, it was richer than what you would get in the private or public sector. There's no question about that. Under our pension plan, I think you were allowed to make—I think it was 75% of your best five is what it came out to if you were fully vested in the pension after about 15 years. Some people thought that was too rich. Rather than Mike Harris coming in and saying, "It's too rich. Let's change it and let's make sure people don't retire at age 42," he decided to scrap it altogether.

So ever since then, we've been without a pension in this Legislature, since 1996. Nobody in my riding believes me. Who in this assembly thinks that in their constituency, if you went out and said that you don't have a pension, you would actually be believed? Stand up, please. I don't see one of you getting up, because you get the same thing I do. They all think we're getting a pension. So my thing is, we can't have a rational discussion at the board about this, let alone in this assembly.

I don't argue that you bring back a gold-plated pension at Queen's Park—I don't argue that for two seconds—but I should at least get the pension of a civil servant. To me, it's weird that I'm employed by the Ontario Legislative Assembly and not at least entitled to an OPS pension. We can't even have that discussion. If we were able to have some mechanism to have those discussions in a more rational way, maybe then members could actually be treated a little bit more fairly and we could have things that are more reflective of what our counterparts get in either the private or the public sector.

I know I'm going to get e-mails stirred up by Liberals and Conservatives as I give this speech, that Bisson is advocating pensions. That's not my point. I want to be really, really clear. I'm not advocating that we have a gold-plated pension. I'm just advocating that we have a process where we talk about members' services and benefits in a way that makes some sense. At the end of the day, we're all responsible and we understand that we're accountable for our decisions. I trust that I'm not stupid enough and other people around this assembly aren't stupid enough to do things that would be completely offside with the public, but I think most of the public would say, "Well, you know what? Why shouldn't you get what the Ontario public sector gets?"

It's a small pension. You work there for 30 years and you get basically a pension of around—I think it would work out to about 60% or 65% of your best five. Now, very few people will be here for 30 years, so it wouldn't amount to much of a pension, but at least there would be something. And when people decide to run for public office and to come to the Ontario Legislature, they can say, "I'm working someplace where there's a pension and there's some mechanism so that I can continue paying into my pension plan for the four years that I'm here," or eight, 12, whatever number of years, "so that as I leave my private sector or my public sector employer, I continue pension contributions for the time that I'm in the Legislature." That at least would be fair. I don't argue that we make some super-duper pension that makes people rich but, at the very least, that people who come here don't lose it.

I was listening yesterday and Mr. Clark said he was CAO of a municipality and he was a member of OMERS. Wouldn't it make sense that there would be some mechanism that he could continue paying what would be equivalent to his OMERS pension? It's not a lot of money as far as cost, and it's certainly not a lot of money as far as the benefit he would get at the end, but at least it would be fairer, so that he and his family are not put in a position where after five, 10 or 15 years of service here there is a five-, 10- or 15-year hole in the contributions to his pension, which may make a difference in a person's ability to retire. Those conversations you can't have unless, I believe, you have some reasonable way to structure how decisions are made here.

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On the broader issue of the interim supply motion, a lot of interim supply motions—and yes, Madame Smith was right when she said I was one of the people who wanted to have a debate on this, because I wanted to put on the record a couple of things: some stuff around the Board of Internal Economy, but also some of the general issues that affect the economy of Ontario, and specifically the place that I come from, Timmins-James Bay.

There is, I've got to say, a real sense of anger out there on the part of the public. It's really an anger that's directed at the McGuinty government. The anger is on the basis, I believe, of a couple of things. One is, people

are feeling that they're getting hit in their pocketbook each and every day.

I was just talking to one of the members from the Conservative caucus before I got up to speak. I asked him unprompted, "What top two issues are you getting in your riding?" He said the same thing I did, and some of the Liberal members I've asked this have told me the same thing: hydro bills and HST. They are still today the top issues why people contact us in our constituency offices when it comes to complaints. I'm not talking about workers' compensation questions or trying to get a birth certificate; those things always happen. But when people contact their elected official to complain, those are the top two issues.

I've been getting, and I'm sure you're getting, phone calls and people walking into my office who have all kinds of horror stories of where they're at. I got an email and I called this woman back I guess on Thursday or Friday last week. She has a house on the same lake where I've got a cottage, out in Kamiskotia. Her hydro bill in the last two years—she's electrically heated, uses wood as a primary source of heat but when she's not there the backup system is electricity. There's no natural gas out there so it means the heating of your hot water, your oven, your dryer, all of that stuff, is all electric. She went from having to pay on average about \$300 a month a couple of years ago to where now she's paying 700 bucks a month. She's saying, "My God, this is getting ridiculous." So I gave her a call and had a chat with her. She is mad as heck and she wanted me to pass on to the government, why is it that you think it's right that she pays all this extra money for electricity that puts her in a position of not being able to make ends meet at the end of the month? She is typical of the many phone calls and emails I get in my constituency office.

I had another gentleman, whom I called yesterday. A Mr. MacDonald, I think it was Joey MacDonald; he gave me a call. I believe he lives in Schumacher. I may have the town wrong. But Joey gives me a call and he says, "Gilles, this is really getting ridiculous. My wife and I do everything we can in order to live within the rules the government has established around when you should use your hydro meter. We don't do our washing and drying in peak hours. We do that in off-peak hours. We do all the things that we've been asked to do. My hydro bill has gone up about \$100 a month since last year. My God, they want me to conserve. At the very least, the conservation rate should have been less than what they have on the bill now." Because all the government did with these smart meters is that they took the going rate and they made that the base non-peak rate and then charge extra above that when you're in the peak.

He said, "Listen, I'm having to pay more than I ever had to before because they brought in the HST in July on the hydro bill, the hydro rate itself has gone up and the government has brought in the smart meters. We find ourselves having to pay almost \$100 a month more than we did before. My wife and I are still working but we're getting close to retirement. My wife's about to retire, I'm

shortly behind her, and we're having to make some decisions about when we're going to retire and what we're going to do. The cost of maintaining our home is going up because not only has my hydro gone up when it comes to rate of hydro and the HST, but so has my gas bill because of the HST, so is the gas that I put in my truck because of the HST."

He just wanted me to pass on to the Liberal government that he, as a constituent of mine, is very angry, is obviously not going to be voting Liberal in the next election; I think he's voting for me. I hope; I didn't ask him, but I would imagine.

I think it is indicative of where the public is at. They're saying, "You know, governments are elected in order to make decisions on behalf of citizens, and we trust that those governments are going to keep that trust in mind when it comes to what you're going to do when it comes to dealing with the everyday issues."

So Joey MacDonald and others who have emailed me or called me or stopped into my offices about hydro are mad as heck, because they're saying, "This government broke that trust. You were supposed to watch out on my behalf, and all I know is I'm working harder today than I ever have before and I'm having to pay far more than I ever had in the past." And the hydro story is just the one.

It doesn't matter where I go in my riding; if it's in Moonbeam, Kapuskasing, Moosonee, Attawapiskat or Timmins. The number one issue I hear about when it comes to complaints is around both the hydro bill and the HST. I think that is true for most members in this assembly who want to honestly say what it is that they're getting at their constit offices. This government, quite frankly, has created a royal mess. They have made some decisions around electricity policy that have driven the price of electricity through the roof.

I find it very amusing when I come into the House and I listen to question period, because if you listen to the Conservatives talk, they would say this is all a Liberal doing. Well, you know, I've been around here long enough to know where this all started: It started with Ernie Eves. Do you remember that guy? He was Premier of Ontario. He was a Conservative, right? I think we all agree. He is the one who started this: the whole dismantling of Ontario Hydro into the seven corporations that it is now—or the nine, whatever it is; I've lost count—OPA and the rest of them. He basically started the dismantling, the deregulation and the privatization of hydro. That was an initiative that was started by the Conservatives.

I remember Dalton McGuinty, in opposition, was opposed to it. He said, "Oh, my God, this is terrible. We're like the New Democrats: We believe that hydro was set up as a crown corporation to deliver power at cost in order to be an economic development tool for the industry that is established in Ontario. One of the main driving forces behind the economic success that we have in Ontario is our electricity rates." I remember those speeches that the now-Premier gave when he was Leader of the Opposition.

Well, my God; a funny thing happened when they got elected. They found the Tory playbook in the cabinet room and they said, "Let's keep on playing the same game." So now the Liberals have embraced it as a Liberal policy—well, to my point, what's a Liberal? It's just a Conservative in a hurry. That's always been my definition of a Liberal. They basically, in essence, have taken the Conservative policy and run with it. So now you've got this pillow fight between the Liberals and Conservatives about electrical policy in Ontario, and I hear the Tories go on about how terrible it is, what the Liberals are doing. My God, they're salivating that they can't do it themselves. This is exactly what the Conservatives wanted in the first place.

When I speak to constituents in my riding—and I speak to people around Ontario who send me emails that I respond to, or phone calls, or when I run across them, wherever I might be—I always try to point out, "Hey, listen, don't give the Tories a free pass on your hydro bill, because a large part of what happens here was set up by way of the initial policies of the Conservative government."

We've now got this mess, and what are we going to do with it? We know, for example, that one of the things that recently happened was—Cliffs Natural Resources was one of the three companies in the Ring of Fire. It's out there, recognizing that people in northern Ontario are saying, "If any ore comes out of the Ring of Fire, that ore has got to be processed in Ontario. That means the refinery, the smelter—everything has got to happen in Ontario. These are our natural resources, and we should benefit by way of jobs and investments when it comes to minerals that come out of the Ring of Fire."

I think Cliffs Natural Resources understood the political mood, not only in Ontario but specifically in northern Ontario, that if they tried to develop those ore bodies up in the Ring of Fire they would not be able to sustain the displeasure, on the part of northern Ontarians, if they tried to move that ore out of Ontario. We saw what happened to Xstrata in the city of Timmins.

So here we go: Cliffs Natural Resources says, "We have four preferred sites where we can build a refinery and a smelter. We've got Timmins, Sudbury, Greenstone and Thunder Bay." They're saying, "Those are the four sites that we're prepared to look at." Further, Cliffs Natural Resources says, in a press release a couple of weeks ago, "We think that Sudbury is probably the preferred site." So of course, myself, as a representative from Timmins, and the representatives from Greenstone and Thunder Bay were advocating for our communities, too. God bless. That's what should happen in this system.

But Cliffs Natural Resources said, "It ain't going to be built in any of these communities if we don't deal with the electricity policy. The hydro rates in this province are beyond what's sustainable to be able to build and sustain that type of production. If the hydro rates are not adjusted to some form of industrial hydro rate, the refinery and the smelter will be outside of Ontario." Do you know where I think it's going to land? It'll probably land in Canada:

Manitoba or Quebec. Why? Because their electricity is less.

My colleague Mr. Hampton raised yesterday a really important point when he talked about this whole issue around Cliffs resources and the Ring of Fire. He made the point that if you compare what Cliffs resources will have to pay in electricity and the difference of what they would pay if they established a refinery or a smelter in Ontario versus Manitoba over a 30-year period, do you know how much money it is? It's a \$1-billion savings. By the way, how much does it cost to build a refinery smelter? It's about a billion bucks. The company is saying, "We can capitalize the entire cost of a refinery smelter being built in Canada if we put it in Manitoba compared to Ontario or Quebec."

If we're trying to compete for these types of investments, and we should be, the Ontario government has got to realize it has a responsibility to ensure that we do what is right for Ontarians, and that is, these are our natural resources, and we need to make it attractive for those mining companies to establish their processes here in Ontario.

There are some in the environmental movement that say, "Maybe it's a good thing that we move it somewhere else because then, that's pollution we don't have to worry about in Ontario." I would say to my environmental friends that it's just moving the footprint somewhere else. I would rather have the footprint in Ontario where I have a say about what the emissions are going to be.

The other part of the story is that Ontario, when it comes to emissions into the air, has the MISA regulations, which are amongst the toughest in the world, to the chagrin of many in the mining industry, forest industry and other industries that are affected. So I say to my friends in the environmental movement, you got what you wanted under MISA, and now some of you are out there saying it would be a good thing if we didn't do those types of activities such as the development of the Ring of Fire.

All I'm saying is that if we don't do it here, it's going to be done somewhere else, and the footprint will be a lot larger because regulations around discharges into the environment are a lot weaker in other jurisdictions compared to Ontario. So I think we should take our responsibility if we have the ability to develop it here.

I just say to my friends, there is an anger out there, a huge anger when it comes to what's going on in Ontario, when it comes to the issue of electricity prices, from both individuals and those people who are worried about their jobs and what happens in industry.

I've only got a couple of minutes left, and I guess at this point it would be hard to get into a whole other subject, so at this point, I will wrap up my debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 52. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 8, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent for everyone to wear Elect More Women: Equal Voice buttons.

I also have the pleasure of introducing Rosemary Speirs, who's the founder and chair of Equal Voice in Canada. Welcome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We'll deal with the unanimous consent first. Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'd like to introduce the friends from OPSEU. That includes Warren "Smokey" Thomas, the president of Ontario Public Service Employees Union—he's right there—along with many other colleagues: Benoit Dupuis, Florry Foster, Roxanne Barnes, Dan Sidsworth, Jamie Ramage, Greg Hamara, Brenda Wall, Marnie Niemi, Gord Hamilton and Rod Bemister. Thank you for coming today.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to introduce the family of page Amanda Belzowski: Lisa, Dan and Joshua Belzowski, who are in the gallery. Amanda is the Amanda of Amanda's Lemonade Stand fame. Welcome.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to introduce in the west members' gallery Bart Millson, the father of Tyler Millson, my legislative page from Leeds–Grenville. Tyler goes to Kemptville Public School, and we're pleased to have Bart with us in the assembly today.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'd like to introduce two of my constituents visiting us today. In the east members' gallery, we have Brian and Lee McPhail.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Joining us in the west members' gallery today is Phil Gillies, former member of the Legislature from 1981 to 1987, who served in the riding of Brantford and served in the Parliament at the same time that my father, Paul Yakabuski, did.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Il me fait plaisir d'introduire aujourd'hui Maureen Hasinoff, who used to work in my constituency office and is a student at Ottawa U, and her better half, Ted Horton.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Visiting with us today will be students from Charles Howitt Public School in Richmond Hill. Their teacher, Mrs. Janice Bainbridge, is with them, as well as Mrs. Bainbridge's daughter Sarah Bainbridge. We welcome them to the Legislature today.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** One of our fine pages is from my area, Scarborough–Agincourt, Lakshman Thayaparam, and his proud mother and father are with us today behind us in the gallery, Usha Thayaparam and Selva Thayaparam. I welcome them to the Legislature.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'd like to welcome today Mr. Mitch Stein, who is the father of Erik Stein, a page from Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I know he has been introduced but I thought it important that I indicate my support for a fellow colleague and a friend, Mr. Phil Gillies, who worked very tirelessly in our community and did good work. He's one of my favourite Tories.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further introductions?

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Canada, His Excellency, Mr. Junsai Zhang, accompanied by the consul general of the People's Republic of China at Toronto, Mr. Ligang Chen. Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature today.

Also in the Speaker's gallery, I'd like all members to warmly welcome the Honourable Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House of Commons and member of Parliament for Kingston and the Islands. Welcome to Queen's Park, Mr. Speaker. I trust that all members are going to show Speaker Milliken how to run a question period.

## INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to ask the pages to assemble for introduction, please.

I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 39th Parliament: Amanda Belzowski, Don Valley West; Beau Bouliane, Sault Ste. Marie; Oliver Campbell, Chatham–Kent–Essex; Michael Church Carson, Beaches–East York; Simon Cook, Oakville; Madeline Diab, Essex; Julian Dusko-Bernyck, London West; Benjamin Hillier-Weltman, Ottawa West–Nepean; Sadie Honderich, Parry Sound–Muskoka; Emily Hutchings, Niagara Falls; Braden Leal, Peterborough; Holly Rose Lorenzon, Vaughan; Brittany McCorriston, Oak Ridges–Markham; Alexandra McLaughlin, Huron–Bruce; Nicolas Meilleur, Sudbury; Tyler Millson, Leeds–Grenville; Ira Sharma, Etobicoke North; Erik Stein, Kingston and the Islands; Lakshman Thayaparam, Scarborough–Agincourt; and not from the riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex but from the great riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, Maria van Bommel; and Hailey Weller, Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Welcome to all of our pages.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Minister of Energy.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would remind the honourable member from Halton that we do not make reference to attendance of members.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, as you are aware, hydro utilities have been fined for charging illegal rates of

interest for late payments, but in a decision released yesterday your Ontario Energy Board said that hydro utilities will be allowed to pass on the \$18 million in illegal fines to Ontario families. Why are you making Ontario families pay the price for illegal activities?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member does raise an interesting question that I think deserves some explanation. This was a lawsuit that started in 1998 under the Harris government in the Ontario courts applying to a practice that, frankly, began back in 1981 when the Davis government was here.

In 2010, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled on the terms of settlement. As part of the ruling from the court, local distribution companies were directed to go to the Ontario Energy Board, an independent regulator, for direction on the recovery of these settlement costs. Yesterday, the Ontario Energy Board did in fact rule that local distribution companies are allowed to recover the settlement costs from the rate base.

While local distribution companies may recover the settlement costs from the rate base, we've directed Hydro One to not do that, to recover the costs from within, and we'd encourage other local distribution companies to do the same.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** With all due respect, this is not an interesting question; it's a scam, what you're doing to consumers across the province. You've made an expensive mess out of our hydro system, and you don't respect the fact that Ontario families pay the bills at the end of the day for your bungling. Ontario families were overcharged for late payments with punitive interest rates. They won a victory when the Superior Court ruled that the utilities were in the wrong and that the interest rates were illegal. But Minister, I ask you again: Why is it, when Ontario families even win in the courts, you still make them pay the price of illegal activity?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** There's no question that Ontario ratepayers are paying the price for a lot of the things that you did when you were in office. They're paying a lot of the bills that you left in this energy system. Why do you think we've had to invest so much to improve our energy system? Why do you think we've had to do so much to improve our generation in this province? Because you left our energy system in a mess. This, frankly, is just another example of that.

We have to respect the laws of this land and we have to respect the courts, but I've made it very clear. Hydro One will be finding these costs from within; they will not be putting these costs to ratepayers across the province. I encourage other local distribution companies to take a similar approach to this.

It's pretty rich when the member from the government that put our energy system into the ground is standing up and suggesting somehow or another—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Come on, Minister. As the expression goes, you know that dog won't hunt. Ontario families want to see a minister who's going to get on his feet and stand up for Ontario families, a minister who will show them the respect they deserve.

So, Minister, to put it back to you: Ontario families were charged exorbitant rates of interest—upwards of 60% annually. Section 347 of the Criminal Code makes it a criminal offence to charge that level of interest. Ontario families, under Dalton McGuinty, who are working hard, who are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Sorry to interrupt, but I'd remind the honourable member that we don't make reference to members' names.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Ontario families, under the McGuinty government, who are working hard, who are playing by the rules, should not be on the hook for the illegal activities of the utilities. Minister, what will you do to set this right and let Ontario families get the respect they deserve?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** It is a little rich that the member is talking about activities that took place while he was in cabinet. This goes back to 1981, and frankly, I can't just blame them for this; governments of all stripes were in power when this was taking place.

The courts have ruled. I would think the member would expect that we would want to respect those rulings. I've indicated what our direction to Hydro One has been and that's that Hydro One should recover these costs from within. I think that's a fair approach. He can support that or he can not support that. Maybe he should share with people what his position would be on this issue.

I would encourage other local distribution companies across the province to follow our lead. I think it's responsible. I think it's fair, in the circumstances. That's what we're going to do. Maybe he should share with Ontario families what his approach would be.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Minister of Energy: This decision happened yesterday, where the OEB—your OEB that you've gerrymandered and turned into another McGuinty tax collection agency—is now passing on illegal fines to consumers. So families who have played by the rules, families who have worked hard, families who have paid their bills are now going to face a jacking of their hydro rates to pay for illegal activity.

What do I see from the minister? He shrugs it off. He says, "There's nothing we can do. We're going to let it happen." Why don't you restore the OEB to its core mandate as a consumer protection agency and say that this outrageous decision will not stand in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think the Leader of the Opposition has a short memory. I would suggest, before he gets up on these issues, that he might want to do a little bit of research into his past history, because the OEB was

following a ruling that took place under his previous government with Enbridge that ruled in the exact same way. What was good then, for some reason, isn't good today.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Sorry to interrupt. The honourable member from Renfrew—I warn him, and he starts to heckle. I just ask that you come to order. I don't need help from the other side.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The Ontario Energy Board was following precedents set when he was in office. You know what? I respect the ruling of the Ontario Energy Board, and I respect the courts of this land as well on this. But I've said to Hydro One that they should not pass on these costs to their consumers, and I would recommend the same for other local distribution companies. What does he think—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, you know that your government has turned the Ontario Energy Board, which should at its core mandate be for consumer protection, into another tax collection agency for the McGuinty government. Now we find out that families who played by the rules, who paid their bills on time, are going to face \$18 million in fines because you don't stand up and fight for them.

You allow these things to happen. You pass them on down; you say, "What's a couple more bucks?" Well, it's adding up for Ontario families, who are saying enough is enough. They want change in our province and a government that respects the fact that families pay the bills at the end of the day. So Minister, I'm going to ask you: Stand up your in place and say this decision is wrong and it will not stand. It is outrageous to pass on these costs to families who played by the rules and paid their bills. Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think I've been very, very clear, and I'll repeat it again so the member can understand. We've directed Hydro One to recover these costs from within, so they'll not be passing them on to their ratepayers, and we recommend to other local distribution companies and their municipal boards that they do the same thing. It will be up to them what they do. You didn't do that with Enbridge. You had the opportunity to do that when that happened, and you chose not to. We've dealt with this in the most responsible way, with ratepayers front and centre in our decision. Perhaps it could be said this is just another piece of that Tory legacy that we've had to clean up: an energy system that was left in a mess; an energy system that was relying on dirty coal; an energy system that was outdated. We're cleaning up their mess every single day, and maybe it can be said that this is just another example of that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My goodness. This minister, like his Premier, is so out of touch with what's happening on

the ground, at kitchen tables and in businesses in our province.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The Minister of Finance will withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Withdrawn.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Quite frankly, a shrug and a wink and a nod is not leadership in the province of Ontario. Families who played by the rules, who paid their bills on time, are now being dinged because of your mismanagement and the fact that you've corrupted the OEB and turned it away from consumer protection and into a tax collection agency. Restore the OEB as a consumer protection agency. Put in place, as we described, a consumer advocate to fight for Ontario families each and every day. Minister, say this is wrong for all utilities in the province of Ontario. Ontario families should not be stuck with the bill for your mismanagement of the system.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Once again, I've been very, very clear. We're the shareholder for Hydro One, and under these circumstances we've directed Hydro One to indeed take these costs on and cover them from within so that they don't pass them on to Ontario consumers. I think the member would know—but then again, he really didn't understand the energy system when he was in office. Maybe he should know that local distribution companies are generally owned by municipalities. They're the shareholders of local distribution companies. I've said very clearly that I would recommend that they go by our example, that indeed they go by the example that's being set by Hydro One: recover their costs from within, not pass them on to the ratepayers. But I think the member knows, or should know, that we don't have the authority to rule that they do that. Indeed, they're independent bodies that are run by municipal boards, by and large.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. For over a year now, I've been asking the Premier to tell families just how much the HST on gasoline, hydro and home heating was going to add to their household budgets. He refused to answer that question, and so did his ministers. Are the McGuinty Liberals prepared now? Are they ready to share that information today with the people who are footing those bills?

1050

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Actually, we shared that a few weeks ago, and you know what we found out? When you factor in our tax credits, when you factor in the personal tax cuts, when you factor in the one-time payments, Ontario families are further ahead. Why is that?

I say to my friends in the official opposition, their expert witness from two years ago is going to be speaking this morning at 11:30. Their expert, Mr. Jack Mintz, is coming to Toronto and will be speaking about the most competitive tax regime in North America for new investment, new jobs, a better future for our kids and fewer taxes for working Ontarians.

Tell us what you'll do differently. Are you going to take it off or are you going to continue to play games with the future of this province's economy?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop—start the clock. Members will please come to order.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** According to documents obtained through freedom of information, the McGuinty Liberals' HST on gasoline, home heating and hydro takes \$1.6 billion out of already-stretched family budgets. Why did the McGuinty Liberals hide from families the true cost of the HST on these essentials?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The documents that I was pleased to release to the opposition show clearly and unequivocally that in fact Ontarians are further ahead as a result of our tax package.

But I think what Ontarians really want to know is, what will the NDP do with the HST? Let me give you an example.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** That's a great document. They're all blanked out.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Hamilton East. Stop the clock.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What will the NDP do? Will they do what the NDP government in Nova Scotia did and raise the HST? Will they do what they suggested we do and raise the old PST? They used to talk about repealing the HST. Now they're promising to amend it and leave it in place.

The only thing Ontarians want to know is, what is that leader's position, what is her party's position and why is she playing games with the future of this economy and jobs for the people in our province who need those jobs?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, \$1.6 billion is \$350 a year from every single household in this province. That calculation does not include this government's 50% rate increase in hydro rates; OPG's proposed 6.2% rate increase; the \$18 million that utility companies will soon be collecting from customers that they've been overcharging on their late fees; or gas prices that are now at their all-time high in two years.

How much more is the HST costing Ontario families as a result of the increases in hydro and gas rates?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd really like to know what the leader of the NDP believes with the HST. She's trying to have it every which way. They said they'd get rid of it; now they're keeping it.

We have laid out a tax plan for jobs and growth—the numbers she's referencing are two years old and incomplete—\$10.6 billion over four years in personal income tax cuts, which will leave 93% of Ontarians ahead of the game, which will leave our tax system more competitive, which will create jobs in places like Windsor, Hamilton, London and right across the north, areas that were hurt

badly during the great downturn. We stand by that package.

We will continue to make the kinds of investments we need to, to build the jobs of the future, to ensure that our kids have a better future and that we have the most competitive tax system for all Ontarians anywhere.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Back to the Acting Premier: While the McGuinty Liberals were hiding their own estimates about the real impact of the HST on family budgets, they rejected our analysis of the HST and kept insisting that customers would feel no pain, that consumers wouldn't feel any pain at all. But they were actually sitting on nearly identical estimates the entire time.

Why did the McGuinty Liberals keep basic information about the HST from the public while rejecting figures that were similar to their very own?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We've actually published these numbers over and over again. What's amazing is that that member is ignoring the work done by the Centre for Policy Alternatives. A chap named Hugh Mackenzie, who would be familiar to many of the members of the NDP, says that this is a net neutral for all Ontarians. That's why every anti-poverty group in this city and many across the province endorse the tax cuts we've done for low- and moderate-income Ontarians.

Difficult times call for real leadership. Leadership is absent on that side of the House. First they say they'll repeal it; then they say they'll keep it. We're building a better future for Ontarians—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Where's your leader? Oh, he's absent too.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I ask the honourable members—I remind them again about making reference to attendance.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** We were just listening to the presentation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Oxford, the Speaker would like to listen and be able to hear as well.

Minister, 10 seconds.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** My colleagues remind me: What Ontarians want to know reminds us of the old song with the NDP on the HST, "Will it stay or will it go?"

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Today the Premier is back on the road chatting with a friendly audience in Vaughan, but who he won't hear from are people like Celine Russell, who writes this: "I live alone, have a small house, and I have been keeping my thermostat at 61 all winter so far. I'm still paying about \$340 per month on my gas bill and \$40 of it is HST tax."

Were the McGuinty Liberals unwilling to tell families the true impact of their HST because they knew just how hated their unfair tax has become?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What Ontarians want to know is, why is the NDP unwilling to say what they'll do about it? Are you going to repeal it? You said that last year. Then this year, they're starting to make amendments to it. Will it stay or will it go?

They ignore the advice of anti-poverty groups and what they have said about the positive impact our tax plan has had on low-income Ontarians. So I ask them again, will it stay or will it go? Just what is the position of the NDP? Do they support the Nova Scotia NDP and believe in raising the HST? I don't know. All I know is, Ontarians want to know, will it stay or will it go?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The finance minister has got a career in the music field.

Carole Barry is a senior living in Terrace Bay, and she writes, "I am a widow who has to live on less than \$1,500 per month. My last heating oil fill-up for the month of January was a whopping \$486."

Do the McGuinty Liberals think that women like Carole won't notice that their government keeps making their lives more and more expensive, or do they simply not care?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think Carole probably should ask the NDP, "What are you going to do with it?" Why did you vote against the northern Ontario energy credit? Why did you vote against every initiative we have done to help consumers, especially northern consumers? So Carole should probably, in her next letter, ask the leader of the third party, "Will it stay or will it go?" And if it's going to go, what are you going to do instead? Are you going to go back to the old provincial sales tax? And remember, they wanted us to raise the old provincial sales tax.

Difficult times require strong leaders. Dalton McGuinty has taken the right decisions to move—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I remind the honourable member that we don't make references to members' names.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Premier of Ontario is a leader who has taken the tough decisions to move Ontario forward, to build a better future for our children, more jobs, a steady hand at the till. That's what Ontarians—

**Interjections:** Will it stay or will it go?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I think we're all doing a real disservice to The Clash. The Clash sing that much better.

New question.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. I'm asking you today to act on a matter of serious concern to Ontario families. Today Ontario families are waking up to discover the impact of Premier McGuinty's gutting the Ontario Energy Board of its historic consumer protection mandate. Now Ontario families will pay \$18 million more for compensation to utilities that charge their criminal interest rates. Someone

has to look out for families. Today, will you appoint a consumer protection advocate to protect Ontario families from the McGuinty Liberals?

1100

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I refer this to the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I appreciate the question, but it's very, very obvious that the member opposite—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Free Gerretsen.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I can free the member from Nepean–Carleton.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members will please come to order.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** It's very obvious that the member opposite didn't listen to the first six questions in this question period, because I stated very unequivocally that we've given Hydro One direction not to pass on these increases to their consumers. They'll have to deal with these costs from within. We're recommending that other local distribution companies do the same.

But it's a little ironic: One minute the Conservatives are calling for us to interfere with OEB decisions; now they're calling for us to not do that. You can't have it both ways, and they're trying to do it. Which is it? Do you want us to interfere with the OEB? Or do you want us to leave them independent?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The latest hit to the pocket-book is just another in a long list of hydro hikes by the McGuinty Liberals, including the regulated price increase, the HST tax grab, the so-called smart meters, the so-called green subsidy, secret backroom taxes, the Samsung deal and OPG and Hydro One rate increases. A few bucks here, a few bucks there: It all adds up to Ontario families not being able to afford the Dalton McGuinty Liberals any longer.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would remind the honourable member—and I'm going to start passing on questions—about making reference to members' names.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I apologize.

When will the McGuinty Liberals show some respect for Ontario families, stop the assault on their pocket-books and give them some needed relief that they need so badly in this province?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member opposite, obviously, and his party have lots of opinions about the efforts we've been making over the last seven years to turn around their ugly energy legacy. We remember that legacy. It was dirty, it was unreliable and it is outdated, and we're turning that system into a clean, reliable and modern system that Ontario families can count on.

He's doing a lot of chirping over there today, but what they don't want to talk about is their plans for energy. Maybe that's because they don't support our clean energy benefit that's taking 10% off the bills of Ontario families over the next five years. How are you going to

explain that to Ontario families? Maybe it's because he'd have to explain to Ontario families why he continues to oppose our efforts to get out of coal and build a healthier future for our kids and grandkids. Maybe it's because they don't have the courage to look workers across this province in the eye and tell them that they don't support their jobs and their plan would put them right out of work. Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Yesterday, the Minister of Health called the hundreds of dollars in fees that hospitals are charging patients who refuse the first available long-term-care bed “completely inappropriate and unacceptable,” and I agree with her. Yet hospitals throughout Ontario have had these policies for years. This practice has been out in the open and the McGuinty Liberals have simply turned a blind eye to this despicable policy. Why, for so many years, did the minister stand by and allow hospitals to threaten to charge distraught families exorbitant amounts of money?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I was very clear yesterday in the House, and I will be clear again today, that it is completely unacceptable for a patient in our Ontario hospitals to be charged in excess of \$53.23 per day if they are waiting for long-term care. I am communicating with the LHINs to ensure that the hospitals are aware of this policy.

Today I am happy to reiterate that it is completely unacceptable to charge anything in excess of \$53.23 per day for a patient who is waiting for long-term care.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Metroland's news investigation documented the illegal fees and the bureaucratic mess that families encounter when they try to place their loved one in a long-term-care bed. The article told the story of the Barger family in Cambridge, who resisted the hospital trap of \$871 per day. To do this, they had to hire a lawyer. But there are countless other families who did not receive legal advice or representation, and they paid these fees in order to protect their loved ones because they felt they had no choice.

Does the minister know, first of all, how many families have paid those exorbitant amounts of money? What is her plan to reimburse them?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would definitely recommend that, if someone has paid the fee, they be in touch with the hospital that charged them that fee to clarify whether that fee was a legitimate fee or not.

As I said, there is no reason why someone waiting for long-term care should be charged that fee. If someone is in a hospital and is discharged and ready to go home, then, yes, there are unregulated fees that are available.

We are working very hard to improve health care in this province. We are working hard to improve long-term

care, community care and hospital care. The Tories tell us, “Let's cut health care.” The NDP are saying, “Let's fund everything.” We are determined to continue to improve health care in the province of Ontario.

### TAXATION

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is for the Minister of Revenue. Minister, critics say that the HST is bad for Ontario. People in my riding of Guelph have asked me why we are implementing the HST and our comprehensive tax package. That being said, Statistics Canada paints a different picture. It shows that Ontario's economy has turned the corner on the recession and is emerging stronger than before.

Minister, can you explain to the House some of the benefits of the HST that we're now seeing?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** That is a very important question. The parties opposite seem to talk down the HST and our full, comprehensive tax package, but a number of studies, including one by Jack Mintz, have said that the HST will create jobs. He says that the HST will create approximately 600,000 net new jobs in the province of Ontario as well as \$47 billion in capital investments.

We have recovered 95% of the jobs lost during the recession, due, in large part, to the initiatives of the McGuinty government such as investing in infrastructure to stimulate the economy, lowering personal income taxes and bringing in measures like the HST.

We will continue to invest in this province to make it stronger and more competitive.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** The minister says that the HST will help create jobs in the province and increase investment. We've also heard that 95% of the jobs lost before the recession have been recovered. In fact, in my riding of Guelph, we can clearly see these benefits emerging. Guelph is a manufacturing town and was hard hit by the recession. But local business operators tell me that the HST and our comprehensive tax package is exactly what they've needed to help them weather the storm and now recover the jobs for my constituents.

If we are hearing that the HST and the McGuinty government's tax package are working, can you explain why the Leader of the Opposition is so adamantly opposed?

1110

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I'm not sure why the parties opposite are against this. One day, they're for it; one day, they're against it, so we don't know where they stand.

But in the hopes that they would like to learn more about how the HST is creating jobs in the province of Ontario—we know that Jack Mintz is in town today. In fact, he will be speaking at the Economic Club of Canada on the tax competitiveness of 83 different countries around the world. I am confident that he will speak about Canada in a very, very positive way.

I have a little suggestion. I think that some members may want to go to the speech, so I brought some tickets. Just in case anybody wants to go—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The honourable member knows that props should not be used in the Legislature.

New question.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question as well is to the Minister of Revenue. Since 2003, the McGuinty Liberals have hit the pocketbooks of Ontario families with the HST, eco taxes, secret hydro taxes and more. Yesterday, the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex showed just how out of touch this McGuinty Liberal government is with Ontario families when she cited a 2003 promise not to raise taxes when she tweeted, "Promise made, promise kept." This is a slap in the face to Ontario families who are struggling to pay for all your hits to the pocketbook.

Minister, why are Liberal MPPs saying you haven't raised taxes when you have?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I appreciate the question from the member. You know, there's a really important speech today. It's happening at 11:30. Jack Mintz is in town. He's going to be talking about how competitive we are as a province.

**Interjection:** Do you have tickets?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** Yes, I have some tickets.

It's important for the member to look at our record and to see what the HST and our full, comprehensive tax package is all about. It's about up to \$12 billion in tax cuts and credits for families. It's about helping families. It's about helping low-income Ontarians.

We want to make sure that we grow a stronger province, because that's what families are asking us to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** If Jack Mintz had a nickel for every single time that minister mentioned his name, he'd be as rich as the Samsung guys with their new agreement.

If the Premier and this minister had spent the last 75 days listening to Ontario families, they would have heard how they can no longer afford his HST, his eco fee tax increases and the skyrocketing hydro bills.

But this out-of-touch Premier and this out-of-touch minister choose to spend their time lecturing Ontarians on their tax increases. On February 8, the Premier gave his one-hour-long lecture in London. How I do know how long it was? Because I had to sit through it in Ottawa. It is very long and tedious.

The question that I do have for this minister is, was the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex a no-show for the Premier's lecture in London, or did she fall asleep before he got to the important part where he lauded his tax increases?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** Again, I don't think I got an answer about whether or not she'd like to go to Jack Mintz's speech today, but if she does, I have some tickets.

Let me just share some of the numbers of the comprehensive tax package: Nine out of 10 Ontarians have already received a permanent tax cut; 90,000 low-income Ontarians have been taken off the tax roll; 83% of everything we buy has seen no changes at all; and the average family will see about \$355 in income tax cuts this year alone. In fact, we have the lowest provincial tax rate in Canada on the first \$37,000. Some transition cheques have already gone out to families, either \$1,000 or \$300. We have the permanent Ontario sales tax credit, which will help families by about \$260 per month.

It's about building a stronger Ontario. That's what we're doing, and we're moving—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Minister of Colleges and Universities. Minister, in October 2008, you passed Bill 90. I remember praising you for doing that because it was a bill that allowed the part-time faculty and support staff at community colleges to be able to bargain collectively, to have a union.

I think, two and a half years later, this bill is still great on paper, but there's a little problem: 10,000 of these workers have cast votes on union representation, and after two and a half years these ballots remain sealed and workers continue to be denied the right to unionize. Are you not embarrassed?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I know the Minister of Labour will want to comment in the supplementary, but I'd like to begin by welcoming the representatives of OPSEU and the college sector who are with us here today at Queen's Park.

I am very, very proud of Bill 90, which extended the right to bargain collectively to part-time and sessional workers in our college system. It was based on the best advice that came from noted labour expert Kevin Whitaker, who is now a respected member of the bench. The bill outlined a process. That process has been put under way and there are issues arising from it which are in front of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. I think that the honourable member would recognize, himself a former cabinet minister, that it would be totally inappropriate for a minister to speak about a matter or to comment on a matter in front of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, which is a quasi-judicial body of this government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Three years later and you're talking about a process—a process that you could intervene in, a process that you, if you're proud of Bill 90, could change today. But you and the Minister of Labour and the Premier refuse to take action on a bill that's yours. The McGuinty government has allowed the management at colleges and their high-priced lawyers to flout the community colleges bargaining act and to block the Ontario labour review board from opening and counting the ballots that workers have cast. The McGuinty govern-

ment still refuses to take action. If you're proud of Bill 90, do something about it. When will this government intervene and deliver on its promise to allow part-time college workers the right to unionize?

**Hon. John Milloy:** To the Minister of Labour, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We recognize that fair and balanced labour laws have been the foundation for our province's prosperity for decades. That's why our government did introduce a Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008, granting bargaining rights to part-time and sessional college workers for the first time and to better serve the needs of students and college systems. The Ministry of Labour promotes a stable and constructive labour relations climate and fosters productive workplace relationships in Ontario. Productive labour relations are the key to economic growth and give Ontario a competitive advantage. The Ontario Public Service Employees Union is seeking to be certified as a bargaining agent for a unit of part-time and sessional college instructors and a unit of part-time college support workers—which process is now before the board. The Ontario Labour Relations Board is an independent adjudicative tribunal, and as the matter is before the Ontario Labour Relations Board—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. On December 1 of last year the minister and I visited an infrastructure stimulus project in my riding in Cobourg, the Cobourg Community Centre, or the CCC as we like to call it. This is an extraordinarily exciting project. The CCC will have a 2,000-plus-seat arena plus a smaller 400-seat arena. There will also be two gyms and change rooms and 1,000 square feet dedicated for a youth centre and three multi-purpose meeting rooms.

The CCC is on track for a grand opening this spring. However, Cobourg council still applied for an extension to the March 31, 2011, deadline to make sure that the workers have time to get the finishing touches done. My question to the minister is, will the deadline extension be granted?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I'd like to thank the member for the question. First, I'd like to congratulate the people of Cobourg for coming together to create this project in partnership with the federal and provincial governments and for becoming part of the largest and most successful infrastructure program in the history of the province of Ontario. Born out of the worst recession since the Great Depression, stimulus is creating 700 jobs in the Northumberland area and 300,000 across Ontario for Ontario families. Indeed, Ontario has recovered 95% of the jobs lost during the recession, compared to only 11% in the US. The federal and provincial governments have worked

together to create over 9,500 projects to improve our quality of life and to improve the economy of Ontario.

I'll deal with the deadline in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?  
1120

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Minister, your comments about the community coming together are exactly right. In the case of the Cobourg Community Centre project, that's happening in all sorts of ways. For example, with the help of Alice Vander Vennen, one of our local artists, members of the community are working together to help design 100 brightly coloured fish that will become a giant floating sculpture for the great hall entrance to the community centre. Plus, we're not relying on just federal and provincial funds for this project. The local community is raising more than \$3 million to put toward the capital costs.

Again, Minister: Will the extension request for this project be approved?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Again, congratulations to the residents of Cobourg, a town of only 19,000, for raising \$3 million towards this project. In general, we expect to approve almost every one of the extension applications we received.

For months our government urged the federal government to join us in extending the stimulus deadline. Not once did the Leader of the Opposition join us in our call for an extension. In fact, he argued against the most successful job-creating program in the history of the province, calling it "too much," and he also voted against it. He voted against 300,000 jobs for Ontario families. He voted and argued against 4,100 jobs for families in his own Niagara region and he voted against the YMCA project in Grimsby. He was a no-plan man for the recession. When will he start standing up for jobs for Ontario families?

#### DIALYSIS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Minister of Health. The waiting list for dialysis services at Collingwood General and Marine Hospital is growing to a crisis level for families and seniors in my riding. There are six dialysis machines that operate six days a week, Monday to Saturday, and three evenings a week, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. At all other times, the machines sit empty while patients are forced to drive long distances to Barrie and Orillia.

People like Margaret Khull are appalled by the idea of having to travel three times a week outside of the local area for dialysis. She told the Blue Mountains Courier-Herald last week, "I live alone, I don't have family to help with the driving and I live on Canada pension so I can't afford the \$500 a month in travel costs."

Minister, why haven't you responded to the hospital's request to alleviate the backlog?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this. There is no question that dialysis is something that, whenever possible, we should

be able to provide as close to home as possible. When someone is on dialysis, they are having to go to wherever they get that treatment three times a week. It is a very onerous lifestyle challenge for people on dialysis. That's why the Ontario Renal Network is looking very closely at expanding dialysis to more communities: so that people don't have to travel as much as they could. We're very committed to increasing the number of people with home dialysis and increasing dialysis opportunities outside some of the major hospitals.

But what's frustrating for me is how a member from that party, a party that is advocating cuts to health care, could stand up and advocate for more.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** The minister knows that what she just said isn't factual at all. We're not going to cut health care one penny.

I set up the dialysis clinic in Collingwood to prevent patients from having to travel long—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** It's not my plan to close hospitals.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** It's not my plan to raise taxes.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Kitchener-Waterloo, Minister of Economic Development, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Minister of Agriculture.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Community Safety, Minister of Finance, Minister of the Environment.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Economic Development for the second time.

Please continue.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I set up the clinic in Collingwood to prevent exactly this: to prevent people from having to drive long distances and to force services closer to home.

For Bob and Shirley McCombie, the long drives to Orillia and Barrie are taking their toll. They told the local paper that they have to drive to Barrie the night before her dialysis appointment, stay at their daughter's house, then drive to the hospital for 7 a.m. and home to Collingwood after the session is over. Mr. McCombie told the paper, "We've had some pretty tough drives, this winter has been terrible for driving." In fact, winter road conditions have caused many dialysis patients to cancel their appointments for this life-saving treatment, which in essence will kill them.

Minister, will you issue a directive today to make it clear that the hospital, with the help of the ministry, needs to clean up—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I said in the initial question, we are committed to increasing our capacity for dialysis and we are committed and acting on increasing the locations where people can get that dialysis treatment.

It is unbecoming of the people opposite to pretend that they can cut taxes and not cut services. I don't know what kind of magic wand they have, but I'm going to give you a little bit of help about what cutting \$3 billion actually means. We could completely eliminate home care for all Ontarians; that could save you \$3 billion. You could shut down the LHINs; that will save you \$70 million. You've got to find \$3 billion more. You could close all of the hospitals, every single hospital on University Avenue, shut down—that would find you \$3 billion, except it wouldn't; you'd have to do that twice. Every hospital on University Avenue, twice. Another option: eliminate drug programs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Health. While the Premier has been busy patting himself on the back for his supposed success in health care, communities across the province are seeing systems in decline. In London, families are facing the province's longest wait for cancer surgery, an excruciating and cruel wait time. Now, hit by the seasonal flu, the situation has only gotten worse, as hospitals have to cancel surgeries and they've seen admission times soar. How can this minister tell families that her health care plan is working when so obviously and clearly that is not the case?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very happy to have the opportunity to talk about the improvements we've made in health care across this province, including in my community of London and the member opposite's community of Hamilton. When it comes to wait times, the party who was in charge before us was afraid to even measure wait times. They did not measure wait times. We came into office and we started to measure. We publicly report. We've made strategic investments. We now have the lowest wait times in Canada, and I'm very proud of that accomplishment.

In the member opposite's own riding in Hamilton we've been able to bring down wait times for angiography by 44% and angioplasty by 91%. Bypass surgery wait times are down by 43% and hip replacements by 58%. Because we measure, because we publicly report, we know what progress we are making and we know where we need to do better, and we are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Notwithstanding this minister's claims, instead of timely and effective solutions to the growing crisis in London, the situation is only getting worse. In January, St. Joseph's urgent care centre started severely cutting back their hours. Urgent care centres are supposed to be taking the pressure off hospitals by

treating less complex patients, and yet they're closing their doors. Now, urgent care is being cut in spite of the staggering burden that London hospitals are facing. Why has the minister completely ignored the concerns of families and allowed the health care disaster in London to get as bad as it is?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would welcome the member opposite to come to London and talk to the front-line health care workers there, talk to the doctors, talk to the nurses, talk to the patients, and ask them if we've made progress when it comes to improving access to primary care and if we've made progress when it comes to bringing down wait times.

I am very proud of the progress. We've got almost 3,000 more doctors working in our health care system today than when we took office. We have 1.2 million more Ontarians with access to primary health care. We've got more than 10,000 more nurses working in our system. Our wait times are down, and our quality is improving. I stand by the progress we've made in health care. I would put our record up against the record of that party opposite when they had the chance to govern this province, and certainly against the official opposition.

#### ABORIGINAL LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Monday marks the fifth anniversary of the challenging events that unfolded at the Douglas Creek Estates. I do understand that only the federal government carries responsibility for solutions to the underlying issues surrounding the Six Nations land claims; however, it is important for all of us to continue to work hard to bring the communities together.

1130

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Dave Levac:** If they heard the question, they would understand that I believe all of us are culpable for this.

It is vital that we encourage citizens of both communities to continue to foster a positive atmosphere so that new relationships based on trust and mutual respect can grow.

Can the minister tell us what he and this government have been doing to move the situation forward in a positive and respectful way?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member from Brant has done some very good work in bringing people together. He recognizes that the solution to some very challenging issues along the Haldimand tract is about building relationships, not taking them apart. So he has supported the good work that Six Nations, the mayors of Caledonia, Brantford and Brant have been doing in working together.

He hasn't been suggesting, as the party opposite has at various times, that maybe you should send in the troops, maybe you should pit one people against another, maybe you should criticize the work of former OPP Commis-

sioner Fantino when he was doing that down there. You bring people together.

Yes, you have to call upon the federal government, which has constitutional responsibility, to get serious, get involved and help resolve—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** In the riding of Brant we've been working with Six Nations leadership, the municipal government and local business leaders to build a lasting local relationship, helping to establish economic development and partnerships that will lead to more opportunities for all of the citizens in the region. Although we are making slow and steady progress at the local level, there is more that needs to be done.

Could the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs please tell us what more we can do at the local level, at the community partnership level and, just as importantly, at the provincial government level to build a more positive culture for the region?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The kids have it right. The kids have launched this pen-pal project where kids from Six Nations and from Haldimand-Norfolk are working together on this pen-pal art project. They understand. They've lived together, they've lived beside each other for many years, and they'll be living together for many years afterwards. Rather than pit one family against another, one community against another, point fingers, sow division, as the party opposite wishes to do, the kids have it right: Work together, live together, play together; you'll find the solution together.

I just wish the party opposite would reveal their plan for Caledonia, their plan for division, their plan for the future. But they're going to keep it secret. They'll get their lessons from the past; we're all about the future.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the Minister of Transportation: This government, through Metrolinx, is poised to sign a multi-million dollar contract with a foreign manufacturer for the purchase of diesel rail cars for use on the airport rail link. A request for information was issued but there was never a formal tendering process, no competitive bidding for this contract. Apparently Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation are content to rely on a tender process issued by the state of California. How does the minister justify yet another multi-million dollar untendered contract?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the member opposite knows that our procurement rules are very tight and that we follow them. The reality is that these cars are built nowhere in Canada. We had to look elsewhere to get these cars, and we followed the procurement process.

The point is that we need to have the highest and cleanest diesel engines possible for this line. They have to be convertible to electric; that is our plan. Our government is making a multi-billion dollar investment in public transit. We have done more than \$12 billion of invest-

ment in transit since we've been in office. That is our commitment, and we will continue to invest in public transit for the GTAA and for the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** In the wake of the eHealth scandal, the Premier repeatedly assured this House that there would be no more sole-sourced contracts entered into by this government. How can this government possibly justify signing yet one more multi-million dollar contract with a foreign company while knowing that at least five other manufacturers, including Siemens of Canada, a large employer here in Ontario, have the ability to meet the very same specifications?

Will the minister agree to put a stop to this backroom, untendered deal and direct Metrolinx to issue immediately an open public tender for this contract?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The procurement process has been followed on every single one of our deals. It has been open, it has followed the rules and it has gotten the best deal for the people of Ontario.

What we are doing is we are building public transit in Ontario. We are building an air-rail link so that Toronto can be a world-class city. We are investing in the transit that is needed in the GTHA in order for us to be an economic driver for this province and for this country.

The member opposite was part of a government that did zero investment in transit, that did zero investment in the moving of goods and people around this province.

I stand by our process. Metrolinx has been involved, as I say, in procurement processes that have followed all of the rules.

It is a bit rich to take advice from the member opposite, who was part of a government that did no investment in public—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ABITIBI DAMS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, you will know that the town of Iroquois Falls—because they've been in contact with you a number of times—is quite concerned in regard to the proposed sale of the Abitibi dams in Iroquois Falls to an unknown entity. They have been asking you to have a public process for review as far as what happens to those dams.

Are you prepared to give them the review they're asking for?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Our government certainly understands the historical significance of those dams and the concerns of our local community. I understand that Abitibi has agreed to sell its shares in Abitibi Consolidated hydro limited partnership, which owns the eight water-powered facilities, to a Canadian consortium. Our government requested that Abitibi ensure that these dams maintain an available supply of competitively priced hydro to the mills.

On September 9, 2010, I wrote to Abitibi, indicating my expectation that if the company sells its majority share, that Abitibi will guarantee that they continue to satisfactorily fulfill the terms and conditions of these leases. We know how important those power generation facilities are in northern Ontario and we remain committed to working with them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, the municipality, the mayor, Mr. Forget, the union and citizens of that community don't trust the process. They went to Montreal last week to meet with the CEO of Abitibi. They didn't get the answers they were asking for.

They're asking that their provincial government, which is there supposedly to protect their interests, have a process that is clear, a process that is transparent, one that the community can have some confidence in, so that at the end, if this is not what it's meant to be, this province can intervene and do the things that need to be done, such as deal with the power purchase agreements and not approve them or not approve the water lease agreements.

I ask you again: Are you prepared to put in place a transparent process now that reviews what Abitibi is doing so that the community can best protect its own interests, because they certainly can't trust you?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I've met with Mayor Gilles Forget and others in the town of Iroquois Falls on many occasions to discuss the future of the dams and the town's pulp and paper mill. The town has been adamant, actually, about its choice to have MNR act as its spokesperson for them on this issue.

Our government understands how important the ability of northern dams is to generate the power and the electricity for the local pulp and paper production. I know Abitibi's business decisions have the potential to impact mill workers in northern communities. We're going to work with them. We want to make sure this is a successful operation.

## WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Water is an important resource that we must protect in all parts of the world. In Ontario, we are surrounded by water, so it would be easy to take our fresh water for granted. But in other parts of the world, many people are suffering due to water shortages.

Some 97.5% of the world's water is salty, and the rest, nearly 70% of the fresh water, is locked in ice. By Ontario businesses developing solutions to conserve water and selling their solutions globally, we can be a leader in the water industry all across the world.

My question to the Minister of Research and Innovation is, what is the minister going to do to ensure that Ontario builds on its water technology expertise so that these companies have an opportunity to succeed?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We have come a very long way since 2003 when Ontarians were afraid to turn the water tap on because they couldn't trust the quality of the water coming out of it. We have actually moved so far

forward that Ontario is now recognized internationally as a world leader in clean water technology. Our Premier has led this province to be a global leader in innovation and productivity on the cutting edge.

Some 97.5% of the world's water supply is salty, as my friend who is such a committed environmentalist knows, and nearly 70% of the fresh water is locked in ice. We are now about to face, in the next decade, one in three people on this planet not having enough water to drink. This calls upon Ontario businesses to come up with better ways, which they are, to reclaim and reuse water and desalinate water, and as a result of this government's investments and partnerships with the private sector, we are leading globally in those technologies and selling them to the world.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I know she was introduced earlier, but I too want to welcome Rosemary Speirs to the Legislature. If you've never had the opportunity, it's one of the most interesting books—I'm saying it in a non-political way—and it's called *Out of the Blue*. Welcome back to the Legislature today. It's a real pleasure to have you here.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would also like to introduce a guest today, Heather Fitzgerald. She's the registrar at St. Jerome's College at the University of Waterloo.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no deferred votes, the House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1142 to 1500.*

### ESTIMATES

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I have a message from the Honourable David C. Onley, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by him.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2011 and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly. Dated February 22, 2011.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm thrilled to be able to introduce today four outstanding women: Pam Hundal from Brampton-Springdale; Liang Chen, Scarborough-Agincourt; Carol Williams, Scarborough Centre; and of course Laurie Scott, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. These are our nominated PC candidates.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm pleased to welcome to the Legislature today Ms. Anne Wang, a university student who lives in Aurora, a very dynamic young person. I

have no doubt that one day we will see Ms. Wang as a nominated candidate for our party as well. Welcome, Anne.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Today we're joined by the mom of Simon Cook, who is a page from Oakville. We're joined today by Annette Cook from Oakville, who didn't want to be introduced, but Simon and I thought it would be a good idea if we introduced her anyway.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I want to welcome several guests from my ministry and my deputy's office who have all worked tirelessly to get us where we are today related to tenure reform in the province. I want to share this moment with my deputy, David O'Toole; Frances Hobbs; Mark Speers, director of our tenure and pricing review program; from our deputy's office, Melissa Faber, Julia Hancock and Joan VanKralingen. From our fabulous legal department, I welcome Andrew MacDonald, Lawrence Fagan and Kimberley Broome, and Nancy Houle, our senior forestry adviser in our industry relations branch. I'm very grateful for their hard work. Thank you, and welcome.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'd like to welcome back again Rosemary Speirs, our esteemed author—I'm also a fan of her big book—and a member of Equal Voice, as well as Donna Dasko. I know that we have a number of representatives from Equal Voice, but I also want to point out Beki Scott, who used to work for me and who is also working very hard on this organization.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** On a point of order, Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent for the capacity to wear my anti-bullying pink shirt for my statement this afternoon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

On behalf of all members of the Legislature, I want to take this opportunity to welcome Laurie Scott back, the member from the 38th and 39th Parliaments from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. Welcome back to the Legislature, Laurie.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### GENERAL MOTORS OF CANADA

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Once again, Oshawa and General Motors are moving ahead to the forefront. This past weekend, General Motors was honoured at the Canadian International AutoShow in Toronto when the Automotive Journalists Association of Canada awarded the Chevrolet Cruze as the 2011 Canadian Car of the Year. This is an extremely prestigious award for General Motors as over 70 of Canada's leading auto journalists evaluated the Chevrolet Cruze against 144 other new vehicles. This impressive award demonstrates the vision and dedication of the new General Motors and its commitment to building quality, world-class vehicles. The Cruze is a refined, compact, fuel-efficient car which

utilizes the newest technology to deliver best-in-class highway fuel economy.

This award comes after another important announcement recently made by General Motors in Oshawa. The Oshawa assembly plant is currently preparing to begin manufacturing the new Buick Regal. The production schedule just became a lot greener thanks to the announcement of the new 2012 Regal eAssist model beginning this fall. Production of the 2012 Regal eAssist will begin at the Oshawa assembly plant on the flex line, fulfilling General Motors Canada's commitment to add hybrid vehicle production at its Canadian facilities.

I am pleased once again that General Motors Oshawa has been recognized as one of the most effective and best-quality car assembly plants in the world. This is a reflection of the dedicated, hard-working General Motors employees from Oshawa. It's great to see General Motors investing in new hybrid technology in Oshawa and continuing to contribute positive impacts in the community.

I'd like to congratulate the work of the Canadian Auto Workers and General Motors for moving forward with innovative, fuel-efficient, high-quality new vehicles and building them right here in Ontario. Great things are happening once again in Oshawa.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I thank the Legislature for allowing me to take my jacket off and put this on, and that's all.

Every day, in Boys and Girls Clubs across Ontario, children and youth get the help they need to learn to develop positive relationships with peers, family, teachers and the people in the community they live in.

In Brantford, the Boys and Girls Club continues to shed light on the fact that countless children are at risk of spending their out-of-school hours alone, left to their own devices and/or vulnerable to the influences of unsupervised street-based activities. The Brantford Boys and Girls Club is committed to providing a good place for kids to be regardless of their circumstances during their out-of-school hours.

I stand here today to recognize the efforts of the executive director of the Brantford Boys and Girls Club, Deanna Searle, to build communities that instill respect, inclusion, fairness, equity and compassion, and not bullying. Deanna Searle and the Brantford Boys and Girls Club are adopting the Pink Shirt Anti-Bullying Campaign Day, which is today, as a day to promote awareness, understanding and openness about problems and about bullying, and to a shared commitment to finding a solution to bullying.

Brantford city council passed a proclamation: Pink Shirt Day.

Speaker, I would ask you and all of the members to join me in raising awareness and wear a pink shirt or some pink item for today only. Let's get rid of bullying in our communities.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Every winter in the break, I hold a couple of pre-budget consultation meetings in my riding to deal with the different organizations that look to see what might happen in the spring budget. This year, I held two meetings, one in Midland and one in Orillia. We had a total of about 33 deputations come forward from the hospital, the colleges, the schools, different organizations—small businesses, environmental centres. It's a really good opportunity to work with your constituents. We've tried to run it in the same fashion that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs runs its pre-budget meetings.

We deal with one organization, St. James Anglican Church in Orillia, under the leadership of Mrs. Helen Perry, who has done a remarkable job dealing with homelessness and people who don't have a lot of extra things in their lives. She has asked me to read this motion into the House. It comes from the diocese of Toronto, Anglican Church of Canada. It reads:

"The vestry of St. James Anglican Church, Orillia, urges the government of Ontario to immediately introduce a \$100-per-month healthy food supplement for all adults on social assistance so that they can afford more nutritious food and live a life of greater dignity." That's the end of the quote.

I'd like to read this into the record on behalf of Helen Perry and the folks who represent St. James Anglican Church in Orillia.

#### POVERTY

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** On February 8, 2011, the council for the township of Wainfleet passed the following resolution:

"Whereas" Mayor April Jeffs, Alderman Betty Konc and staff member Natasha Dawn "of the township of Wainfleet took part in the Food Box Challenge to raise awareness of poverty and the effects of poor food choices;

"Whereas from personal experience we know that the food from the food bank is high in sodium content and sugar and has a large carbohydrate content, as well as no fresh fruit or vegetables, thereby creating a poor diet;

"Whereas we know that the correlation between a poor diet is related to poor health, and in particular that those on social assistance have less access to food that makes up a good and balanced diet will more than likely have more diet-related illnesses due to poor diet;

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"Whereas we also know that children in poverty who have little or no access to a balanced diet have a higher incidence of obesity and diabetes, and poor performance in school;

"Whereas 14% of Niagara residents and 15.6% of Niagara's children live below the poverty level;

"Whereas children and their families constitute approximately 52% of the people receiving social assistance in Canada, as of 2003;

"Whereas we know that the federal government estimates that a person needs \$1,300 per month to survive and that the provincial social assistance for a single person is \$592 per month, leaving a gap of about \$700 a month;

"Whereas the 'Put Food in the Budget' initiative is to encourage the provincial government to increase the monthly social assistance by \$100 for food;

"Whereas we all know that those in a vulnerable position in life need advocates, it is now upon this council to advocate for those in our community who are vulnerable, to have the extra money in their budget for food...."

This council supports the increase in the food budget for persons on social assistance in the province of Ontario. I do too, and I condemn this government for dragging its heels in that regard.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I was being a little generous with the honourable member, who took advantage of the Speaker.

#### REEVES OF HALIBURTON- KAWARTHA LAKES-BROCK

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** The recent municipal election brought changes, big and small, to communities across Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. I recently had the pleasure of speaking briefly at a municipal council's inauguration ceremony. Looking around at the new and returning council members, I remember thinking what an honour it is to hold the trust of your community and to be elected by your community.

Today, I'd like to thank four individuals in particular. They are four local reeves who for years held their communities' trust and who deserve thanks for their dedicated service through municipal government.

First is Jim McMahon, former reeve of the township of Minden Hills. Jim served for more than 20 years in municipal politics and should be proud of his many accomplishments. Jim has been succeeded by Barb Reid.

Next is Neal Cathcart, who served as reeve for 15 years in the township of Cavan Monaghan. Neal, too, should be proud of his leadership and representation. Neal has been succeeded by John Fallis.

Third is Tom Flynn, who retired in 2010 from his position as reeve in the township of Galway-Cavendish and Harvey. Tom provided 30 years of guidance to his community as a municipally elected official and has been succeeded by Janet Clarkson.

Last, but certainly not least, is Eleanor Harrison, who retired in 2010 from her position as reeve of the township of Algonquin Highlands. Eleanor committed 23 years of dedicated service to municipal politics and has been succeeded by Carol Moffatt.

Each of these former reeves knows the value of their community's trust. Each has worked hard to listen, learn

and lead. Each leaves their community in capable, trusted hands. My sincere thanks go out to Jim, Neal, Tom and Eleanor for their roles in building a better Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

#### RAY DESJARDINS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'd like to say hello to all my friends who are watching in Barrhaven today.

My friend John Baird once wrote that Ray Desjardins "has served as an inspiration and exemplary role model for the members of his community." On his 70th birthday, I wanted to thank Ray in this esteemed chamber for doing what well-known and respected Rabbi Reuven Bulka has noted of Ray. He says, "Ray is a true champion of the welfare of our veterans, and has made this a life mission." Indeed, Ray has.

Ray has been a serviceman, a public servant, a community association leader, a fundraiser for our very own Perley Rideau Veterans' Health Centre and an officer for his church. But one of the greatest examples of Ray's dedication to our community and to our country was his steadfast belief that the fast-growing community of Barrhaven needed a Royal Canadian Legion to celebrate our veterans and Canada's new generation of soldiers, who have served and who continue to serve our country in Afghanistan and around the world. Thus Ray became the founding president of the Royal Canadian Legion, branch 641, of Barrhaven, of which I am a proud member.

I, of course, understand it was no small task to bring this legion into existence, because it was only started four short years ago. This legion is the first legion in all of Canada to be created in the last 25 years.

Today Ray is our branch chaplain. He presides over both happy and also solemn occasions. Recently we lost a comrade, Jerry Jodoin, who was a friend to us. He was also a World War II veteran.

Ray is a cancer survivor. He's a cherished friend of many of us in Barrhaven. He's also married to Carolyn, who has been a true partner to him in every sense of the word.

So, on behalf of the residents of Nepean-Carleton and, I know, all of my colleagues here in the Ontario Legislature, I want to let Ray know that he is appreciated. Happy birthday, Ray.

#### TOM SYMONS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Professor Tom Symons is well known in my riding of Peterborough as a man of integrity and commitment to the betterment of his community, and like many people with a strong sense of right and wrong, Professor Symons made his decision to put his name forward to sit on a board. The board he chose to become chairman of for four years was the Peterborough Lakefield Police Services Board. As a community representative, he served the board and the police association well.

Earlier in his life, he was a founding member of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. Chairing the police services board allowed him the opportunity to use his experience in human and civil rights but from a new perspective. He did his job very well.

During his time on the board, he forged relationships between the board, the police association, the police force and the community. This was not always an easy task but a challenge Professor Symons met with conviction and intelligence.

Community leaders like Professor Tom Symons are rare. He still sits on the board of 300 foundations and teaches occasionally at Trent University, a university of which he was the founding president, as well as being a Companion of the Order of Canada and a member of the Order of Ontario.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank him for his commitment to the police services board and wish him good luck in his future endeavours. I know that wherever choices lead him, he will be a tremendous success.

#### ATIKOKAN RENEWABLE FUELS

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** A short time ago, I was in Atikokan at the Legion hall for a great announcement in the community. Atikokan Renewable Fuels received the province's first new wood supply, 179,000 cubic metres, which is in addition to an already existing 100,000 cubic metres per year. I also announced \$1 million from the northern Ontario heritage fund for a plant conversion and another \$250,000 for a heating system conversion.

When we were first elected, the old Proboard mill was closed. Our government injected \$6.5 million, creating FibraTech and employment for roughly 130 men and women. This announcement will once again breathe life into this facility. The wood allocation will create 95 jobs in the plant and the woodlands operation combined.

Atikokan Renewable Fuels will produce wood pellets to create electricity for both domestic and international customers. As many of you already know, I was able to announce the conversion of the Atikokan generating station to biomass. There will be a competitive tender to supply the generating station with a fuel source. With Atikokan Renewable Fuels being so close, they will be well positioned to bid competitively to be the supplier to the station, and that could create additional long-term employment in Atikokan and northwestern Ontario.

With these recent announcements, and all of the mining activity in the area, the job situation is much brighter than it was a couple of years ago, and the community is looking more confidently towards the future.

#### RAINBOW FAMILY DAY

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** This past Monday, we all got the opportunity to celebrate the fourth annual Family Day across the province, a fantastic new tradition in our province's life since 2007. I think it's safe to say that all ridings across the province are establishing new trad-

itions around Family Day, and one such new tradition started in my great riding of Ottawa Centre. For the first time, we hosted the first annual Rainbow Family Day event in my riding at Jack Purcell Community Centre. It was an exciting event which was a great success, and we look forward to making that event a regular event for families to come together and celebrate our diversity and to relish the ties that bind us together.

I was honoured to be part of this event that welcomes GLBTTQ families and their allies to come together for Family Day and enjoy a day of fun and community spirit, and there was a lot of spirit and fun to be had at this event. We had a great pancake breakfast—I got the opportunity to flip some pancakes—as well as a family skate; a family swim; Rainbow Family Day stage with theatre, dance, music and more; a welcoming youth lounge; and a lot of other activities put together to ensure that families of all kinds are welcome and are able to enjoy Family Day within our communities.

I want to give special thanks to Morris Rothman for bringing together this event and making it such a success. I look forward to celebrating Rainbow Family Day every single year on Family Day from now on.

#### WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT REPRÉSENTATION DES FEMMES AU PARLEMENT PROVINCIAL

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes on the issue of greater representation of women in the provincial Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.  
Premier?

1520

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** C'est un grand plaisir pour moi que d'appuyer cette motion.

It's a pleasure to speak in support of this motion.

I want to thank everyone at Equal Voice for supporting female candidates, attracting outstanding people to public life and challenging everyone to think creatively about getting more women elected.

I think it's a truism: Our Legislature should reflect the society we serve. When we achieve that, then we are at our best in addressing the real lives of the people who elect us. That is why, during our last election, our party promised to nominate female candidates in half of our open ridings. I am proud to say that we beat our target, supporting female candidates in 55% of the ridings. This gave us a caucus with 19 women, with 11 serving in cabinet. We're going to keep up this important effort.

Il nous faut attirer plus de leaders qui sont des femmes, et il faut que plus de femmes répondent à cet appel. En vérité, plus il y aura de femmes en politique, plus notre démocratie sera dynamique et pertinente.

We need to put out the call for women leaders, and we need more women to answer that call. The fact is, the

more women there are in politics, the more vibrant and dynamic and thoughtful and relevant our democracy will be. That's because women bring unique perspectives, which lead to creative solutions; they bring different approaches, which lead to better collaboration; and they bring strong voices, so that all Ontarians are better heard in this chamber.

One of the great benefits of attracting more women to choose public life is that we have a better understanding of how we can best support women in whatever career they choose. This broader understanding led to our government launching full-day kindergarten; creating 22,000 new child care spaces; creating and increasing the Ontario child benefit; raising the minimum wage seven times over and changing the Occupational Health and Safety Act to address workplace violence, including domestic violence and sexual harassment.

Having said that, it would be a mistake to presume that more women here only means more progress on women's issues, however we choose to define those. The fact is that progress on increasing the percentage of female MPPs means progress in all areas of public policy. You just have to look at the career of one Agnes Macphail, one of the first two women elected to this Legislature and the first woman to be a federal MP. Those groundbreaking achievements rightly make her a hero today. But in her day, the achievements she fought for were things like: a better deal for farmers, more humane treatment of prisoners, and dignity for seniors through old age pensions.

She did more than stand up to discrimination against women; she stood up for all. She did more than break down barriers for women; she built up the society that we all enjoy today. As we prepare our province to meet the challenges of a new century, we need many more Agnes Macphails.

En Ontario, nous sommes privilégiés d'avoir de belles écoles où les jeunes filles peuvent s'épanouir, de remarquables collèges et universités où de jeunes femmes peuvent faire des études, une économie dynamique où les femmes bâtissent des entreprises et de solides communautés où des dirigeantes trouvent des solutions à des problèmes, qu'ils soient gros ou petits.

In Ontario today, we're fortunate to have great schools where girls are thriving; outstanding colleges and universities where young women are studying hard; a dynamic economy where women are building businesses; and strong communities where female leaders tackle problems both large and small.

So my message on behalf of our party and the government to all Ontario women is simply this: We need you. We need your experience. We need your energy. We need your insights. We need your ideas. We need your idealism. We need you right here in this Legislature working with us to continue building a stronger Ontario for all Ontarians, right here in the greatest province in the best country in the world.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** As you may not know, my first real-life experience with public office was not actually here in

the Ontario Legislature; it was out at the municipal level, years and years ago. My mom was a high school teacher. She worked in special needs, and decided, against all odds, to run for council in the town of the Fort Erie. It wasn't expected she'd win, up against a veteran in the community, and it was a tough election. She knocked on every single door in her ward and won that first one in a squeaker by seven votes in total. She worked hard and took on leadership positions—we're awful darned proud—and won the next two consecutive elections by massive majorities as a credit to her hard work.

I'm proud of my mom and the work she did for her community. I learned a lot about leadership, dedication and public life.

Quite frankly, she's not the only woman who taught me what it takes to serve, to lead, to be a dedicated public servant. In 1997, during my first term, I was appointed by Premier Harris to be parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health. I got to serve with Elizabeth Witmer, at the time the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. Through Elizabeth, I saw the dedication required to be a leader in caucus. I saw her run, with confidence and knowledge, Ontario's largest ministry and learned never, ever to forget that it's the people of your riding who send you to Queen's Park. No doubt that's why Elizabeth Witmer, former Deputy Premier of the province of Ontario, is the longest-serving woman MPP in the history of the Ontario Legislature.

When I was first elected in 1995, fully 15% of the Legislature was made up of women MPPs. Today, that number has grown to 26%. Although not quite the desired one third that Equal Voice promotes, the merit and ability of the women in this place are extraordinary, and they are setting an example and inspiring young women and men right across the province of Ontario.

Look to my right. My colleague from Whitby–Oshawa: deputy leader of our party, critic for the Ministry of Health, a strong leader on the Ontario PC team.

Right behind me, the member for Nepean–Carleton: our critic for Revenue and government accountability; as members opposite know, a tenacious advocate here in the Legislature in defending the family budget; and also—Debbie and I know a bit about this ourselves; we have a little girl at home—balancing responsibilities and a home life in Ottawa from miles and miles away.

Christine, Lisa, Joyce, Sylvia, Julia: strong members of our team. It is in no small part to their credit that fully 30% of the new MPP candidates nominated to run for the Ontario PC Party since I have become leader are women joining our team who want to bring change to the province of Ontario.

I want to recognize, while I can, some of those leaders who have joined our team in the House here today: Pam Hundal, a lawyer from Brampton–Springdale, an active volunteer; Liang Chen, Scarborough–Agincourt, who is an associate dean at the University of Toronto, Scarborough campus; retired Catholic high school principal Carol Williams from Scarborough Centre, today helping to train new teachers; and Laurie Scott, a registered nurse

for more than 20 years, from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and a former MPP.

We also have on our team Nancy Branscombe, the top vote-winning candidate in the city of London council elections; and Paula Peroni, Nickel Belt, who serves as president of the Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association: dedicated, hard-working professionals who want to fight for their communities, who want to bring change to the province of Ontario. I welcome our future colleagues who have joined us here today in the Legislature.

Our team: bringing decades of experience as true community leaders, professionals who want to bring change to our province, and part of a team that will continue to stand up for Ontario families, to demand the respect that they deserve, and bring needed relief and a chance to catch up.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and the PC candidates, I commend Equal Voice for the dedication, for the leadership, for the progress and the steps you have gained. I look forward to working with them and my colleagues in this and future elections as they strive to achieve their goal of more women MPPs here in the Ontario Legislature.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Having an equal voice for women in this Legislature should not be difficult, but history has shown it to be anything but simple.

Agnes Macphail was elected to represent the voters of Grey Southeast in the federal election of 1921, the first woman to be elected to the House of Commons, even though women were not officially even recognized as persons under the law at that time.

Since then, we've certainly seen a lot of change. Women, working together, have redefined their role in society, and we owe them a huge, huge debt of gratitude. But, we're certainly not done yet. You can't tell me, when you look around this room, that we're complete with our task.

1530

Women make up over half of our country's population, but only one in four of the people elected to this very Legislature are women. Only one in five of the members of the House of Commons are women. Canada stands 50th in an international ranking of women's political representation.

Now, I'm proud of the fact that I'm the first woman to lead my party in this Legislature, but in a strange way I'm also a bit saddened by the fact that that still remains something that has to be indicated as noteworthy these days.

The New Democrats have a very strong track record that we're quite proud of. We regularly nominate the most women candidates and we regularly elect the largest percentage of women in our caucuses, but we can do much better ourselves. I'm very clear to indicate that. We can't be satisfied with just some progress.

Women have achieved important reforms and broken down barriers, but there's still much more that needs to be done. The increasing inequality that we see today

affects all of us, but women suffer disproportionately, and I believe electing more women to legislatures like our Legislature will mean real success in dealing with these issues and will benefit our society as a whole. But there's a lot of work to do.

**Employment equity:** We've actually gone backwards in the last couple of years from when employment equity was first raised in this province. Public, licensed child care: We see children dying in unlicensed child care in this province because we don't have enough licensed child care. Safety and security in our workplaces and our communities: again, people dying in the workplace for no reason, because we don't have proper and adequate laws and procedures to keep workers safe.

The work may appear to be daunting, but our mothers and our grandmothers understood that once you take that first step towards making a change in your world, the question stops being whether the change will come and the question then becomes when the change will come.

So it's a personal priority of mine to ensure that Ontario New Democrats are part of that change. That will mean getting more women nominated, which we're in the process of doing right now. That means helping them win; providing training, support and assistance to help women overcome barriers to their participation. It's an important initiative, but it can be done because I know that there are plenty of qualified women who, with some encouragement and support, will make excellent MPPs—and I dare say, MPs as well. Many of them we may not know right now. Many of them I may not know right now, but I know that women have never backed down from a tough and challenging job and I know that by increasing the representation of women at all levels of government, we will not only make strides towards equality but we will also ensure better, more representative, more inclusive government for women, for men, for children and for the future of a just Ontario.

## SPECIAL REPORT, OMBUDSMAN

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that today I've laid upon the table a report from the Ombudsman entitled Response to Request for Information from the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, February 2011.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### ONTARIO FOREST TENURE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA MODERNISATION DU RÉGIME DE TENURE FORESTIÈRE EN ONTARIO

Mr. Gravelle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur la modernisation du régime de tenure forestière en Ontario et modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur la durabilité des forêts de la Couronne.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The minister for a short statement?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Ministerial statements, Speaker.

#### SMALL BUSINESS BILL OF RIGHTS, 2011

#### CHARTE DES DROITS DES PETITES ENTREPRISES DE 2011

Mrs. Munro moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act to enact a Bill of Rights for small business / Projet de loi 152, Loi édictant une Charte des droits pour les petites entreprises.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** This bill creates a bill of rights for small businesses in Ontario.

#### MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AMENDMENT ACT (COMMENCEMENT OF TERM OF OFFICES DATE), 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES ÉLECTIONS MUNICIPALES (DATE DE COMMENCEMENT DES MANDATS)

Mr. Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 153, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 to change the date on which the term of offices begins and to make related amendments / Projet de loi 153, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales pour changer la date de commencement des mandats et apporter des modifications connexes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** The bill amends the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, to change the date on which the term of offices governed by the act begins, from December 1 to the second Monday in November in the year of regular elections.

The bill also amends the act to reduce the time frame within which recounts of votes must be completed.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### FOREST MANAGEMENT

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I think every member of this House knows that the Ontario forest industry has suffered a number of serious setbacks, particularly in recent years. Despite this, the sector has some incredibly strong advantages. We have a large sustainable supply of quality fibre and we have a solid infrastructure. Perhaps most importantly, we have the expertise and the drive of the people who work in this sector.

Today I am very pleased to introduce a bill that, if passed, would help re-energize Ontario's forest sector, create new jobs and attract investment while ensuring that this critical public resource continues to be managed sustainably.

Modernizing the forest tenure and pricing system would make Ontario's timber supply and prices more responsive to market demand, create new opportunities for entrepreneurs and make it easier for aboriginal peoples and communities to effectively participate in and benefit from this sector.

This proposed reform is a very strong sign of this government's confidence in the future of forestry. If passed, the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011, would stimulate a bold rethink of how our forest sector will do business in the future. It would help ensure that forestry activities continue to benefit not only the families, the communities and the businesses that rely directly on this sector, but all Ontarians.

1540

To achieve this, we are proposing to pursue two new governance models. First, the act, if passed, would enable us to establish local forest management corporations. They would manage crown forests and they would oversee the competitive sale of the timber in a given area. The second new governance model we would pursue is the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licence. That would consist of a group of mills and/or harvesters that collectively form a new company to manage the crown forests.

We would continue to work with the forest industry itself, with other key stakeholders and with aboriginal peoples to further develop the operational details of the models and the implementation plans. We would certainly also work with these groups to test and to evaluate both the initial local forest management corporations and the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences.

The legislation introduced today was drafted after extensive consultations through public sessions, round table discussions and sessions with key industry stakeholders and aboriginal communities and organizations. We certainly listened carefully and we responded substantively to the concerns raised in the consultations. I believe that this is actually very evident from the positive response to our proposed modified approach.

For example, the Ontario Forest Industries Association calls our proposed path forward “a positive development that provides much-needed certainty for operating mills while at the same time creating opportunities for new investment in the sector.”

The Timmins Chamber of Commerce told us that the use of enhanced shareholder SFLs is in line with their request for working with an existing industry development model that is benefiting their members.

We’ve also had some very real interest expressed from some First Nations communities for the establishment of a local forest management corporation in their area, and we’re very, very excited about that.

I do want to acknowledge and thank everyone upon whose comments and advice we have relied. Earlier today, I introduced a number of people from our ministry; I want to thank them once again for the extraordinary hard work that they did.

In the weeks ahead, we will continue our consultation efforts so that interested parties clearly understand the intent of this legislation. If passed, we would also look for their advice on how best to implement it. I look forward very much to the debate.

I do want to thank especially my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources, Linda Jeffrey, for her assistance throughout this process. It was extraordinarily helpful and supportive.

Our government is absolutely committed to implementing a forest tenure and timber pricing system that works for the province of Ontario, and we want to implement change in a responsible and measured manner. I believe that the new tenure system proposed would achieve these goals and point us toward better access and better use of our very highly prized forest resources.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I guess before I start my address on this Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, I will commend the minister and his ministry for providing a briefing on this bill before it was introduced into the House.

But I will say that for two years now we have been under this forest tenure review—two years of uncertainty in our forestry sector, two years of bleakness in forestry, two years when we’ve seen over 60 mills closed, over 40,000 jobs lost. And in two years’ time we have received this bill, which is really nothing more than an empty vessel. It’s 16 pages which really provide nothing other than a backtrack, one more backtrack by this Liberal government, in their obligations to the north and to our forestry.

It does do a couple of things, this bill. We do know that in those 16 pages there are a few things it does do. It does provide another vehicle for political patronage. It does create additional agencies of the Liberal government called forest management corporations, local forest management. These are additional agencies, if we don’t have enough already. We already have over 600 agencies, boards and commissions in this province, but we’re going to create a few more with this bill.

What we have seen with these agencies, boards and commissions, like the LHINs, is a very significant and very purposeful method of shielding the government from the decisions of the day. As we have seen with the LHINs, we are now seeing I guess what we would call the forestry LHINs, or the FLHINs, being created by this Liberal government.

But I think there is also very much of importance. Within this bill there are a couple of very significant components: changes to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. Of course, we won’t know what all is going to happen because there aren’t any regulations—very few. Everything is going to be done by regulation afterwards in this bill, and I don’t know how many more years the forestry industry is going to have to suffer and wait for the regulations to be done on this. Under the changes to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, the minister now has the ability to arbitrarily cancel licences, has the authority to cancel supplies and, in an arbitrary fashion, leave the people in our forestry industry once again with uncertainty about their future, uncertainty about their supplies. That starts on page 13 of this act.

What also is significant in this act is significant protection for the ministry, significant protection for the minister, significant protection for the local forest management corporations; that whatever they do there can be no liability, no remedy attached to those agents of the crown. That goes from page 14 through page 16 of this act: limitations on remedies, no remedies, proceedings barred, no expropriation or injurious affection, exception, exception. The crown leaves itself harmless from any of its actions but puts three or four more years of uncertainty into an already very devastated resource sector of this province.

I’m very disappointed that in two years’ time this Liberal government has achieved absolutely nothing except one more backtrack and one more slap to the people of northern Ontario. This Liberal government manages to pass the buck once more as they try to pass a bill—these are not really bills that are being introduced in this House. They’re just looking to pass the buck, not bills.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I’ve got five minutes but it’s going to be hard to cover all that I want to say.

First of all, the government is proposing to do a fairly radical change here when it comes to the forest tenure system in the province of Ontario. My first caution is, I certainly hope to God that the government is not proposing to do all this and finish third reading this spring. If that’s what you’re asking us to do in this assembly, I think this will be short shrift to the process, and people in northern Ontario are going to be pretty skeptical of the process in the end.

This is one of these things where we’re asking to make a major shift when it comes to how we manage our forests in northern Ontario and, more importantly, how we allocate that timber to those who need it. If we’re being asked to do this in a session that I would think is going to be a fairly short one this spring—second

reading, committee hearings and third reading—I would argue against that and I'll be opposing it, if it's just on that point alone.

I've gone through this before, as other members in the assembly have, in regard to changes in how to manage forests, first under Alan Pope, before I was here. My predecessor as minister brought into place a system of managing our forests for the first time. It got plenty of time at second reading. It went out to committee. There was lots of discussion. The bill was fine-tuned based on what we had to say because, do you know what? The bureaucrats and the government didn't get it right the first time and it came back as an amended bill at third reading.

1550

I was part of the committee under Howard Hampton when the sustainable forestry development act was put forward, where we actually had time to deal with it. It went over a couple of sessions so that there were proper hearings in between second reading and third reading. More importantly, those affected—the communities, the forest industry, First Nations, environmental groups and others—had an opportunity to really have a say. So this had better not be a truncated process, because you're going to have me offside right at the beginning.

Is there a need for forest tenure reform? Absolutely. I don't have a problem with the idea. Should we go in the way that the government is going? I think it's worthy of discussion. But the devil will be in the details, and let me just raise a couple of them.

This would be an ideal place in this legislation to deal with one of the issues northern Ontarians have wanted to deal with for a long time, and that is dealing with the allowable cut. If we were to put into the legislation that we will protect 26 million cubic metres of wood a year, as has been recommended by chambers of commerce, by municipalities, by First Nations, by the OFIA and others, I think that would be a starting-off process, because at least then we wouldn't see this as a diminution, making the wood basket smaller for those who need it.

If this is about how we can learn about how to do forest management practices better so we can become even better than we are now, then that would be a step in the right direction. So one of the things that I would be looking for is for the government to deal with the allowable cut issue, and I think this is a place that we're able to do it.

The other issue is, as I read this—and I've not read the legislation, I must admit. I've only read the compendium, and it's only a page and a bit long, so the details, as I say, are in the legislation—but this had better not put at risk any timber that is currently associated with a mill or a mill that may be shut down right now, looking to reopen. For many of those communities, that's the only game in town. You're not going to build a car plant there, you're not going to launch the next moon shot from there, but you will cut trees and you will process them in those communities. So this had better not affect wood that is currently associated with current mills. I would put that

up front at the beginning. I don't know; I haven't read the legislation.

The other issue is that I looked at the compendium, and it talks about basically making this a market-driven process when it comes to pricing our wood. My God. Some would argue, "Oh, well, that's not going to be so serious, because who is left in the wood industry may not raise up the price." But we know that eventually things will get better in the US of A, where they like to buy our wood and dimensional lumber products that we make out of Ontario. If we go to a competitive wood pricing system, you will have, when the market is good, mills which will be competing on price for the wood. That'll be really good in the upswing when the economy is doing well, which it will in the forest industry eventually, but it's going to kill our industry in the longer term. So I just warn the government that this had better not make this a market-driven price and drive us to an American solution. I suspect that what we are trying to do here is speak to the constant threat of the Americans bringing us before the free trade and bringing us before the various processes on the countervail duty.

The other issue is, I'm not sure how this deals with the unutilized timber that is so much wanted by smaller operators out there. I know that my colleague the former Minister of Natural Resources in the Conservative Party was a huge advocate, as I am, on this issue. I know France Gélinas has people in her riding—as I have in my riding, as you have in your riding, as minister—who are trying to get access to unutilized timber to do some innovative things when it comes to value-added in the wood industry.

I look forward to the debate. I look forward to reading the legislation, but I warn you now: second reading only, this spring. We are not going to go to third reading on this at the end.

## PETITIONS

### HUMAN RIGHTS CODE

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that everyone has freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression; and freedom of association; and

"Whereas concerns have been raised from a broad spectrum of citizens about the conduct of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal; and

"Whereas section 24(1)(a) of the Ontario Human Rights Code fails to protect religious organizations from the imposition of secular values and morals and insufficiently protects the freedom of association of religious individuals and inadequately protects the freedom of religion and conscience of religious communities;

"Therefore we call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stand up for our freedoms by amending the Human Rights Code and removing the phrase 'if the qualification is a reasonable and bona fide qualification because of the nature of the employment' from section 24(1)(a)."

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Sudbury, and it reads as follows.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning, a publicly insured health service ... ; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask our new page Ira to bring it to the Clerk.

#### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents, as requested in Bill 33, put forward by MPP Kim Craitor.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law

Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

I affix my signature and send it via page Maria.

#### OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you for the pleasure to present this petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and"—indeed—"a duty to protect the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier government to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permit process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Minister of the Environment initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the Oak Ridges moraine until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to prevent contamination of the Oak Ridges moraine."

I'm pleased to sign and present it to one of the pages, Erik, on his second day here.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I have a petition that is certified by the Clerk.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST)."

I have affixed my signature.

#### WASTE DISPOSAL

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I have a petition of 624 signatures of concerned citizens of the township of Russell.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned residents of" Glengarry-Prescott-Russell "in the province of Ontario, draw to the attention of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario the following:

"Whereas the petitioners have serious grievances with the proposed development by Taggart Miller Environmental Services, proponents of the Capital Region Resource Recovery Centre (CRRRC) planned for the old Russell shale pit and surrounding properties

between Eadie Road and North Russell Road, between routes 100 and 200 in the township of Russell;

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"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"To take action to cause an absolute cease and desist order for this proposed CRRRC development by Taggart Miller Environmental Services on this site of the old Russell shale pit and surrounding properties in the township of Russell in the province of Ontario."

I fully understand the concerns of those people.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is pushing ahead with the installation of so-called smart meters and mandatory time-of-use billing by June 2011 despite the flaws with the program; and

"Whereas 21 energy distributors, including provincially owned Hydro One, have said that the rush to make time of use mandatory by June 2011 doesn't give them time to fix all the problems with the meters, fix bugs with the software to run them, and to fix the inaccurately high bills they produce as a result; and

"Whereas the Ontario Energy Board, in a letter of August 4, admitted that energy distributors 'may encounter extraordinary and unanticipated circumstances during the implementation' of time of use, and said that 'these matters need to be addressed';

"Whereas relying on computer technology that the energy industry says is not ready, isn't reliable and is making families pay too much on their hydro bills;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To call upon the McGuinty government to suspend the smart meter time-of-use program until billing problems are fixed and Ontario families are given the option of whether to participate in the time-of-use program" or not.

I affix my name in full support.

### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that has been gathered by USW Local 1005 from Hamilton, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Tyler to bring it to the Clerk.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have a petition from Brad Vander Hock from the great community of Strathroy, Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I agree with this fine petition, will affix my name to it, and give it to none other than Braden Leal.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

"Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

"Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

"Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

"Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

"Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector.”

As I agree, I have affixed my signature, and give to it page Simon.

### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J’ai une pétition qui me vient des gens de Sudbury, de Nickel Belt ainsi que de Sturgeon Falls :

« Attendu que la mission du commissaire aux services en français est de veiller à ce que la population reçoive en français des services de qualité du gouvernement de l’Ontario et de surveiller l’application de la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que le commissaire a le mandat de mener des enquêtes indépendantes selon la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que contrairement au vérificateur général, à l’ombudsman, au commissaire à l’environnement et au commissaire à l’intégrité qui, eux, relèvent de l’Assemblée législative, le commissaire aux services en français relève de la ministre déléguée aux services en français;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu’il relève directement de l’Assemblée législative. »

J’appuie cette pétition et je demanderais à notre page Sadie de l’amener à un greffier.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I was tested.

On behalf of a good colleague and friend of mine:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

“Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

“Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

“Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Enact Bill 115, a private member’s bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery.”

I sign this petition and hand it to our page Benjamin.

### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’m pleased to stand shoulder to shoulder, if you will, with the pharmacists in my riding of Durham. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Stop the cuts to front-line health care and the disorganization at our pharmacies now.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this, in support of pharmacists and other health care providers in my riding of Durham, and present it to Simon, one of the new pages.

### CHRONIC CEREBROSPINAL VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

“Funding and approval of CCSVI diagnostic treatment.

“Whereas, even though health care institutions in Ontario have the equipment and expertise, those MS patients who have been diagnosed with blocked veins in their neck (CCSVI) cannot receive the necessary treatment in Ontario; and

“Whereas many of the MS patients with CCSVI, at great personal expense, have had to seek treatment in other countries such as India, Poland, Bulgaria, Italy and the US, the provincial government still has not authorized the procedure, which is angioplasty, an already approved procedure since the early 1980s; and

“Whereas not all people diagnosed with MS have been found to have CCSVI, and not all people who have CCSVI will have been diagnosed with MS, CCSVI treatment should be authorized and treated on its own merits, regardless of any MS issues; and

“Whereas, [despite] numerous testimonials of exceptional post-treatment improvements in the quality of life for patients, accompanied by detailed presentations by vascular surgeons to the Ontario government, the Ontario government still has not yet approved CCSVI treatment;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Health, must immediately approve and fund all diagnosing and treatment of CCSVI by qualified Ontario health institutions.”

It’s my pleasure to present this petition, and I will ask page Ira to bring it to the Clerk.

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSED TRANSACTION OF THE TMX GROUP AND THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE GROUP

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that a select committee on the proposed transaction of the TMX Group and the London Stock Exchange Group be appointed to consider and report its observations and recommendations concerning the impact and net benefit to Canada, including Ontario, its economy and people, Toronto's financial services sector and northern Ontario's mining industries.

In order to develop its recommendations, the committee will do the following:

(a) invite both parties to the transaction to appear, specifically: TMX Group and London Stock Exchange;

(b) by March 10, 2011, conduct at least two days and no more than four days of public hearings in Toronto and allow participation from across Ontario and Canada via Web conference, teleconference or video conference and by written submissions due by March 10, 2011;

(c) consider the role of the TMX Group in today's capital markets and how this might evolve;

(d) consider the emergence around the world of consolidation amongst exchanges and the outcome and implications of these consolidations;

(e) identify the role to be played by Ontario's financial sector in the proposed transaction, including management, regulation, direction, location of activities, listing of stocks, clearing and software development;

(f) evaluate the short- and long-term impact of the proposed transaction on number and quality of jobs in Ontario;

(g) consider the effect of the proposed transaction on future investment in Ontario, including the mining sector;

(h) examine opportunities in the proposed transaction to strengthen Ontario's role as a financial services centre, and consider potential risks;

That the committee shall present or, if the House is not sitting, shall release by depositing with the Clerk of the House, its final report to the assembly by April 7, 2011;

That the committee have the authority to meet at Queen's Park on March 2, 2011, from 12 noon to 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., March 3 from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., March 9 from 12 noon to 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and March 10 from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., to call for persons, papers and things; to employ counsel and staff; and, as the committee deems relevant to its terms of reference, to commission reports; and

That the committee may meet at the call of the Chair for report writing; and

That the committee may examine any other matter it deems relevant to its terms of reference; and

That the committee be composed of the following members: Mr. Phillips (Chair), Mr. Klees (Vice-Chair), Mr. Arthurs, Mrs. Albanese, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Van Bommel, Mr. Zimmer, Mr. Shurman and Mr. Bisson.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 53. Mr. Bradley.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** We have unanimous agreement, I believe, that 40 minutes be allotted to each party to debate government notion of motion 53, at the end of which time the Speaker shall put the question without debate or amendment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Speaker, if I may?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** The government might better seek unanimous consent for an agreement that indicated that each caucus has up to 40 minutes to speak to the motion and any amendments put to it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** To the honourable member from Welland: That is implied as part of the debate, but certainly, if the minister chooses—Minister of Community Safety.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** If it's implied, I think we would all agree that that shall be the case.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed. Debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I am looking forward, along with my colleague Mr. Shurman in our caucus, who I know will be participating as well, to the committee hearings. Mr. O'Toole is going to be speaking to this motion, as well as Mr. Miller, as our finance critic. I look forward to participating as a member of this committee.

There is no question that the business before us and that will be before the committee has significant potential implications to not only the province of Ontario but to our country, so I welcome the opportunity to participate in this select committee. I also welcome the initiative of the government to strike this committee for the purpose of considering what I believe will be an incredibly important proposal for not only the financial services sector but for businesses throughout this province and, in fact, our country.

I want to say at the outset, though, that I have some very serious concerns about the positioning that the Minister of Finance has taken so far. In many ways, he may well have already undermined the very purpose of this committee. I opened one of the newspapers this morning, and the very bold headline reads, "TSX Merger Bad for Small Biz: Duncan." It goes on to talk about how the Minister of Finance for this province has already expressed his personal view. We know in this place that there's no such thing as a minister of the crown expressing a personal view when he speaks publicly, so he has already made a very strong statement in terms of

his positioning and, I expect, the positioning of this government.

I read in the *Globe and Mail* dated February 17, "Ontario's Finance Minister is challenging the sales pitch for a transatlantic deal between the Toronto and London stock exchanges and questioning whether it makes sense for Canada to join forces with an overseas partner." I'll go on to quote because I think it's important for the record that people understand the challenge that this select committee will have as we carry out our business.

I have a great deal of respect for the Chair, Mr. Phillips. I know that he brings not only a number of years of experience here in the Legislature, but also, prior to that, in business. I have the confidence in him that he will provide appropriate leadership as Chair of this committee. I have serious concerns, however, knowing what happens to committees in this place, that there will be little, if any, objective listening as we meet with stakeholders and that there isn't already a foregone conclusion in terms of the position that government members will be taking.

I quote again from the *Globe and Mail*, this article on February 17. The finance minister is talking about Mr. Thomas Kloet, chief executive officer of the TMX Group, which is the owner of the Toronto Stock Exchange, and Xavier Rolet, his counterpart at the London Stock Exchange, who met with the minister last week to discuss this proposal with him. Following this meeting, here's what the finance minister had to say to the *Globe and Mail*: "Not only are they not a very good storyteller," Dwight Duncan told the *Globe and Mail* on Thursday, discussing for the first time his meeting with the architects of the deal, "but if they have not thought through the communications of this, have they not thought through the substance of it?" either?

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I think the first responsibility that we have as legislators, as members of this committee and as members of this House is to ensure that when we take an issue such as this, considering it important enough to strike a select committee so that we can hear from stakeholders, we be objective and we send a strong signal to those coming forward to present their case, pro and con, that they will not be wasting their time in this legislative process.

I would want this from the finance minister, notwithstanding what he has said to date: I would like to hear from the finance minister—and that he make it very clear as this committee ramps up—a public statement that he will set aside his preconceived notions, that he will keep an open mind to the evidence that will be presented and that he will take the advice of the committee, which he, I would hope as well, will allow to function independently of his personal views as they've been expressed to date.

This merger is being proposed, as has been stated, for the benefit of both markets and the viability of markets here in Ontario as well as those overseas. The objective, as I understand it, in the proposal wouldn't have been brought forward had the proponents not firmly believed that it would be in the best interests of both entities. Our

responsibility as a committee will be to investigate that. We have a responsibility to ensure that whatever takes place will be in the best interests of Ontario, of Ontario businesses and of this country. We have a responsibility to be vigilant, so we'll be considering the testimony as we hear it.

I don't pretend to be an expert on this topic, and I don't believe, as we look at the membership of our committee, there is a great deal of expertise relative to the nuances of this deal on the part of any of the committee members. Therefore, it's particularly important that we take the time to listen to experts who will be coming forward and providing us with their evidence, their arguments and their supportive information to make the case, either pro or con.

I can commit to the House that I and my colleagues will be taking that position: that we have an awesome responsibility here to deal with the information that will be presented to us, that we will assess it carefully and, at the end of the time, work co-operatively with all members of the committee so that we can make a recommendation to this House that will be in the best interests of Ontario, that will be in the best interests of Canada and that, at the end of the day, will result not only in economic activity but an improved quality of life for everyone here in this province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, that was interesting. I was just wanting to hear what the Chair of the committee had to say, or other members of the Liberal caucus. I didn't want to get up right away because, being the only speaker in the New Democratic caucus to this issue, I wanted to make sure that I properly heard the arguments from the other side.

First of all, I just want to say at the beginning that I'm going to be moving an amendment to this motion. I might as well do it right now; I've got the copies.

I move that the motion be amended as follows:

By adding clause c.1 as follows:

"c.1 Conduct up to four days of travel for the purpose of holding public hearings in Ontario mining communities, this travel to take place during one or more of the recess periods between March 10 and May 5;" and

By deleting the words "its final report to the assembly by April 7, 2011," and replacing them with "an interim report to the assembly by March 10, 2011, and its final report to the assembly by June 2, 2011;" and

By adding after the words "to commission reports; and" the following:

"That the dates, locations and times for public meetings in Ontario mining communities be established by subcommittee;"

I send this over with Erik to the clerks' table, and I would ask for this amendment to be accepted, if you want to bring that over.

Let me first of all deal with the procedural—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** After?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Bisson has moved an amendment as follows:

"By adding clause c.1 as follows:

"c.1 Conduct up to four days of travel for the purpose of holding public hearings in Ontario mining communities, this travel to take place during one or more of the recess periods between March 10 and May 5; and

"By deleting the words "its final report to the assembly by April 7, 2011," and replacing them with "an interim report to the assembly by March 10, 2011, and its final report to the assembly by June 2, 2011;" and

"By adding after the words "to commission reports; and" the following:

"That the dates, locations and times for public meetings in Ontario mining communities be established by subcommittee;"

Mr. Bisson.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Let me just speak to that motion first and generally to the issue. The government is proposing that this committee be struck in order to take a look at the possible effects of a merger of the TSX/TSE with the London Stock Exchange. I think most people in the assembly, myself included, don't have a fairly good idea what that really means. I think it's cautious and I don't think it's a bad thing to refer this thing to committee so that the assembly could look at the issue and then pronounce itself on what they think would be the move for Ontario: Should we or should we not? Or should the TSX take over the London? Because quite frankly, we're as big as the London to a certain extent and it would be advantageous for us to do so for a number of reasons I'll talk about later. Nonetheless, the government wants this issue to go to committee.

Here's my fear, and it has already been raised by Mr. Klees. I would say the riding but I don't remember the riding name.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Newmarket–Aurora, because I know I can't use his name, so that was the way I got the riding in. He raises the issue, and I think it's a fair one.

We have seen plenty of examples in this assembly where committees and select committees have been charged to look at very important issues for the province of Ontario and all of the good work the committee does comes to nothing, and so we ask ourselves as members of this assembly what this is really all about. Is the government truly interested in taking direction from the members of the assembly? Or is the government just going to do what the government is going to do and use this committee as a way of hiding behind some recommendation that is contrived by the majority? Because we know that the government controls the majority of the committee, and they could easily have a situation where the opposition parties don't agree with what the government members have to say, and the government says, "Well, the committee has looked at it and a majority of the committee thought this was a great thing for Ontario, so we're going to hide behind the committee." And if that's what this is all about, I tell you now I don't want

any part of it. I think we're all very busy. We've all got great things to do for the people we represent in the province of Ontario, and let's not enter into a process that is going to give short shrift to what is I think a very important issue.

I know there are people in the mining community who think this is a great thing. If I'm the Vale Incos of this world, if I'm the Chinese interests trying to buy into Canadian resource companies, this is great news because you will be able to gobble up lots of Canadian natural resources, specifically Ontario natural resources, by the back door. They're kind of doing it by the front door and the back door right now, which is a whole other question, but will it certainly make it a lot easier for them to be able to buy other companies, to basically take control of other companies, and make more and more decisions about what happens to the natural resources here in the province of Ontario. I know there are some in the mining community who are going to call me and say, "Gilles, this is a great thing and your party should support this."

But on the other hand there's great concern because we need to understand that the Toronto stock market, the Toronto Stock Exchange, is an exchange that was primarily built out of mining. There has been a whole history in this province and the city of Toronto, where we are right now, where we have become the mining capital of the world. Most of the money that is raised, most of the expertise when it comes to putting together new companies, when it comes to listing them on the market, dealing with the legalities of that and dealing with the financial dealings on that is here in the city of Toronto. And why? Because the TSX is here.

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I fear there is a possibility that, if we merge with London and we fall under the London rules, a lot of those experts and a lot of those firms that are currently here in the city of Toronto, who employ lawyers and economists, various types of people who are involved in the purchasing and the creation of companies and listing them on the stock exchange, will end up going the way of London. Is that what we want in the province of Ontario, to go from being the mining capital of the world when it comes to financing of mining to being relegated to a backwater to London? If that's what this is all about, I want no part of it.

I think we need to have a debate—or not so much a debate but we need to have a discussion, I think would be the right word—with those people who are much more learned about this, who work in the financial system here in Toronto and across Ontario when it comes to mining; who understand how you list companies on the stock market, what the ins and outs are and what it means. We need to give them a proper opportunity to prepare themselves and come to speak to the committee.

That's why I'm putting forward this particular motion. The government is asking, by way of their motion, that we're essentially going to have, at the most, four days of hearings in the city of Toronto within the next couple of weeks. Well, this is a pretty complex issue. You're

asking Ontario to buy a pig in a poke, as they would say, with the merger of the TSX with the London exchange. This is not something that, in my view, people get their heads around in two minutes. It's something that you've really got to think about: What are the short-, medium- and long-term implications to the Ontario economy, and specifically to the mining sector here in Ontario?

So at the end, if it's found to be, "Oh, my God, this is the best thing since sliced bread and we can make this work," that's one thing. I don't think that's where it's going to end up, but that's one thing. But if it turns out, as I fear, that for the pluses we get in merging with the London exchange, there are the negatives which mean we lose control of our own mining industry and the ability to raise the money the way that we have, the way that we've been successful in bringing online some of the best mining properties in the world in a jurisdiction called Ontario, well then, I want no part of it.

We need to give people the opportunity to have their say, but not just people here in Toronto who work in and around the TSX as far as listing companies on the exchange and dealing with the legal and financial matters of mining, the raising of capital etc. We also have to get input from the people who are going to be affected in the end. You know what? That's people in northern Ontario.

People don't realize this, but the largest thing that drives the TSX is the mining sector. When it comes to how much money is raised in this province, a majority of the money that is raised for junior mining companies in Ontario comes out of the TSX. There is a fear that if you move the exchange to London and the money is raised through the London exchange, those juniors will lose out to the senior mining companies.

Again, God bless De Beers Canada and Vale and Xstrata and others that I won't name. They're trying to make bucks and they're trying to run their business, which is mining, and I understand that. But do we want to give more and more control of our mining exploration and development to the larger mining players or do we want to make sure that we have a strong, vibrant community of small explorationists and people in the business who are able to go out and yes, to speculate on what is a good mining property; to spend some money to find out if, in fact, there is ore on that property that they have been exploring for some time and to be able to raise the money to do so independently from the large mining companies. Eventually, the large mining companies will have these properties, but the way that we bring the properties from being "Maybe there's a mine there," to a mine is by allowing the juniors to do the work that they've got to do. Then eventually the Vales and the Xstratas and others—the Goldcorps, the Lake Shore Golds—go out and buy those, and the junior mining company goes back and starts all over again.

So we have to allow the exploration community in Ontario to continue to be as strong as possible, because the exploration community, I would argue, in Ontario has been under attack for a long time.

When I was first elected in 1990, many moons ago, one of the first issues I had to deal with was a gentleman by the name of Dave Munier, who I think now lives in Kirkland Lake, if he's not back in Timmins. I can't remember the other man; I think his name was Perry or Price. I've got to remember his name later; I don't have it in my mind. They came to my office and they said, "The junior mining companies in Ontario are going the way of the dodo bird. We have less and less junior mining explorationists in the field. If you don't have the geologists and the prospectors doing the kind of stuff that the Don MacKinnons of this world have done up at Hemlo or others have done across this province, you're not going to find the mines that we need to find to sustain the mining levels that we see in Ontario when it comes to how much ore is extracted from the ground and how many jobs and riches come from that." They came to me and they tried to impress, in the 1990s—in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993—what they needed governments to do in order to shore up the junior mining explorationists.

I've got to say, I was very proud to be a member of the NDP government, which basically sat down with the junior mining exploration companies; we sat down with the mining companies. It was a process that took over a year or a year and a half, and we made some fundamental changes to how we were able to support the junior mining companies in this province. As a result of that, I would argue—we didn't save them all because of them did close down—we managed to maintain a fairly healthy mining community to what it would be today when it comes to junior mining explorationists. I would argue that if we hadn't done what we did in the early 1990s, a lot of the junior mining explorationists that we see in the field today might have gone the same way as some of their brothers and sisters did, as they ended up having to leave this province to find work because there wasn't any work in the exploration industry.

This proposed merger with London coming over and merging with the TSX: If we fall under the London rules, what does that mean to the junior mining exploration companies in northern Ontario? That's why I put forward a motion that I don't see as deleterious; I see this as complementary to what the government is trying to achieve: Have the committee meet in Toronto for those four days that the government proposed, have an interim report issued by the date that the government said they would put forward a final report, but then give the committee the opportunity to continue working until the spring so that we can do as much work as possible between now and the next provincial election.

All of this is going to play out in the next six months, and I believe that as an assembly we need to have the opportunity to review this and to look at it and pronounce ourselves as to what advice we think we need to give our provincial and federal governments when it comes to this particular issue.

I don't think we're going to have a definitive answer by March 10. If all we allow is people to come into committee hearing rooms here in Toronto for those four

days, I predict that we will not fill the committee chambers for four days of hearings. I predict that now. Why? Because most people—some of them—will not even have heard of this; some of them are still out in the bush doing the work, by the way. Others will not have had a chance to pull together the thoughts that they need to put on paper so that they're able to come before this committee and do what has to be done.

So let's have an initial go at those who are ready to go, hear what they have to say, do an interim report, report back from the committee what we see as being the issues pro or con when it comes to an interim report, and allow us the time thereafter to really look at this in some detail so that we can really give some good, informed advice to the minister and the cabinet when it comes to the decision whether Ontario should support a merger of the London exchange with the Toronto exchange, or should Ontario instead say, "Okay; as long as Toronto becomes the mother ship." In other words, we become the drivers. Maybe that's where we have to go. I don't know, but those are the questions we have to ask.

Number two, the motion speaks to: Where mining happens is where we need to go and talk to people. So we need to get into Timmins, into Sudbury, I would argue into Thunder Bay or into Red Lake, so that we're able to talk to those people who are in the mining business, who are the junior mining explorationists, who are the prospectors, who can come to us and say, "Hey, I've been reading all about this, and here are my thoughts."

I will venture to guess that there are a whole bunch of prospectors out there and, I would argue, some junior mining exploration companies, who will not have the time or the means to get to Toronto to stand before a committee here in Toronto. So, go to Timmins, go to Sudbury, go to Thunder Bay and possibly Red Lake in order to give people an opportunity to have a say in those mining communities—maybe even Kirkland Lake; I skipped over Kirkland Lake and I shouldn't have done that because it's a mining player as well—and have an opportunity for them to have their say.

If the government says, "We can't go to all the mining communities," then let's decide which ones we're going to go to, because I think we're going to get a very different story. I'd be willing to bet that if we go to northern Ontario and we listen to the prospectors, we listen to the junior mining exploration companies, we speak to the economic development corporation people in those communities, we talk to mayors and councils and chambers of commerce and others and labour councils, we're probably going to get a fairly different picture than what we're going to get out of Toronto. It might be complementary, but you're going to get a different take on it. They may have some of the same basic concerns but a much more practical and different way of coming at it.

1640

I think there are essentially two or three things that we have to watch out for through this process. That's why I'm asking that the government extend the hearings, allow us the time after the interim report to do some

additional work and allow the committee to do its work. Election cycles being what they are, I can't prevent that there's going to be an election come October 6. I know there are a lot of Liberal members who would rather not have an election on October 6. A lot of New Democrats would argue that we'd like to have one, and it's going to happen because it's fixed in our constitution. The point is that we're going to be on summer break and into an election cycle before the second week of June. I think that before we rise in this place, we should at least give this as much time as we can and work that needs to be done.

Here are a couple of my concerns up front. As I said earlier, I think there are some mining companies that will come before the committee and say, "Right on. Best thing in the world. Love it!" I'm sure it's going to happen. But I can also guarantee you that there are going to be others that are going to come ringing alarm bells, which tells me that there really are two sides to this. I think it can almost be taken down to big versus small. If you're a large mining company, and I'll give you an example, you're probably more likely to support this for a couple of different reasons. One is—look at the situation of what used to be called Falconbridge in Sudbury. For those who don't know, Falconbridge was a Canadian-owned large mining company in Ontario based out of Sudbury. They operated primarily in the nickel deposits out of Sudbury and Manitoba and some processes down here in southern Ontario. For years and years that company operated. It was quite successful and negotiated some good collective agreement with the Steelworkers, provided lots of employment for people in those communities, and they made lots of money and workers did well. Mind you, it was a struggle, but generally they did okay. All of a sudden, a company by the name of Vale wanted to—no, let me first of all start. Falconbridge was originally a bid from the Chinese, who wanted to buy Vale at the time. The Chinese, primarily because they want access to the natural resources, are interested as a growing consumer of natural resources to secure as much supply of natural resources as they can from wherever in the world they can. They saw Falconbridge as a pretty good thing. If they could buy Falconbridge, they could then get themselves some nickel matte and have it shipped over to China and use it for the various processes you use nickel matte for.

At the time, that particular deal was not allowed. It was found not to be in the interests of Canada that we allow a foreign nation to buy out Falconbridge. The government of the day thought that wasn't a good idea. I think the way it went is that they were actually never told no, but the Chinese basically withdrew their offer. That was the end of that, we thought. But within a year what ended up happening is that the Chinese bought the debt of Vale. Vale, being a large multinational mining company—essentially what the Chinese did is say, "What we can't do by the front door when it comes to buying Falconbridge, we can do by the back door if we hold the debt on Vale." Vale came in, and the rest is history. They

came in and they bought out Falconbridge. They became the principal shareholders of Falconbridge with most of the debt being secured by the Chinese. The rest is history again. We saw Vale, who came in at first when the price of nickel was way up here and said, "Don't worry, Sudbury. Don't worry, Ontario. Everything will be fine. We're not going to do anything to shake things up here. We're going to make sure that workers are well paid. We're going to make sure that our responsibility to the community is maintained and we are going to be good corporate citizens in Ontario." Howard Hampton, Shelley Martel, Gilles Bisson, Tony Martin, Charlie Angus and other northern New Democrats gathered in Sudbury, remember, when this deal was being inked, and said, "We warn that the province of Ontario should oppose this takeover," because in the end, if Vale takes over, this is all about securing our nickel matte. At the end of the day, this is about taking the control of our natural resources out of the hands of Canadians and putting the decisions about what happens in our communities to people who live far away and who have less concern for what happens to Mr. and Mrs. Smith living in Sudbury or wherever it might be.

Of course, the media gave us some play, but the government of the day, under Rick Bartolucci as minister and Dalton McGuinty as the Premier, said, "They don't know what they're talking about. Them New Democrats, they're always saying these things. You know that this is going to be a good corporate citizen. Everything is going to be wonderful." Go tell that to the communities that just went through a one-year strike when Vale Inco came in and said, "We just want to make a couple of minor changes to your collective agreement. We want to basically gut your pension so that no new employee hired at Vale is going to have a defined pension plan." That's something that workers in Inco in Sudbury fought for and went on the picket line for 10 months for; that's something they worked on all of their lives, for the workers of the mines of Inco to be able to retire with a decent pension by having a defined pension plan that is paid by whom? It's paid by the workers. These are deferred wages that the workers negotiated at the table instead of wages, and then they made pension contributions to boot.

Vale comes in and says, "We want to throw all that out. We think that workers who are there now should be entitled to some pension—that is, a defined pension plan—but we think all new employees shouldn't have the same thing." So they pit new workers, to-be-hired workers, against the current members. And the current members, I think, made the right decision—it was a very tough one—and said, "Listen, we're not going to put at jeopardy, just automatically, the rights of new workers to come and work here. They should be entitled to the same defined pension plan as us." So they went out on strike for a year. That was issue number one.

Issue number two: This is the one that was really laughable to me. The United Steelworkers, Local 6500, when Inco was making not a lot of money, when the price of nickel was low, the union said, and I remember

because I was a Steelworker then—still a Steelworker today, but I was, at that time, a member within Local 4440 out of Timmins, out of the McIntyre mine. The workers at Inco, through Local 6500, said—and I remember, because I was at the wage conferences, what we used to call the northeastern Ontario council, where we had these discussions. Local 6500 said, "We have a proposal. Rather than asking our employer to give us money in our wages that they're going to have to bank and pay for each and every year at a time when they can't control the price of nickel, we're going to go for a nickel bonus. Rather than asking for an extra 10 or 15 or 20 cents an hour, we're going to negotiate a nickel bonus, that our bonus is based on the price of nickel and the cost to produce the nickel in our mines."

I thought that was a very responsible thing for workers to do. It recognized that the employer couldn't control the price of the commodity that they were producing, and it allowed the workers to benefit in the case where the price went up, and when the price went down, they shared in the pain. I was proud to be a Steelworker who was a member of a union that actually proposed that as a way of dealing with what the vagaries of the market are and how difficult that is for the employer to pay wages.

We agreed to that. Not only did we agree to it; the floor for us to get the money was set fairly high. We didn't set it at the price of nickel then; we set it at a price that was fairly high. All of the experts in the industry were saying, "If the price of nickel went up to that, we'd all be happy. We can live with this agreement. If the price of nickel goes to the point that's been negotiated in the nickel bonus, we don't worry because we don't think it's going to get there, and if it does it won't stay there long and won't go much higher." So they were perfectly willing to live with it.

In fact, Falconbridge lived with it when the price of nickel went up. The price of nickel not only went up to that floor price that we had negotiated, but it went way beyond. So Vale came and said, "We don't like that. We want to get rid of it. This is bad. Why should we give all these workers all the money?" And they started this rumour in the community that somehow or other it was really unfair that workers were getting this kind of money, that this wasn't right—terrible, terrible. Well, the money that the workers got was a pittance compared to what the company made on the price of nickel. I would venture to guess that the cost to pay out the entire nickel bonus was probably less than 10% of the profit that the company made in addition to what they would have made when the price of nickel was lower. In other words, the company got to keep 90% of the increase, and we only got 10%.

Community members, through Sudbury—not everybody but some of them said, "Those workers are greedy." They forgot to think that when the guy or the girl gets their nickel bonus at Inco, where do they go spend their money? They go by a Ski-Doo. They go buy some timber for their cottage or their house. They go and buy a car or a truck. They spend money in Sudbury, and make that

money go round and round and round in the economy. Inco, essentially, took money right out of the community in Sudbury and put it into the coffers of Vale so it could be spent somewhere outside of Ontario.

1650

Am I a little bit fearful of the larger mining company that does that, such as Vale? Absolutely. I believe they should have the right to make money, but I believe they have a responsibility to the community in which they operate and to the workers.

I say all of this not only because of what happened in the strike and on the picket line in Sudbury but because of what happened in the ensuing years with Vale and the Chinese. If you now go take a look at who actually owns Vale, a majority of the shares of Vale are not owned by Vale; they're owned by the Chinese, because they basically have secured the debt. When you figure out—I think I wrote the numbers down here somewhere. I did a bit of research based on something somebody sent me. Of course, I dropped my glasses. It's kind of hard to read without these things. If you take a look at—where did I put that? I've got so many papers here.

Anyway, aside from the point of what the actual numbers are, the point is this: The Chinese now own the largest percentage of shares of Vale if they were to cash in their debt and the shares they currently own.

The bigger issue for me is: How did we allow that to happen? That was a takeover by the back door, as one gentleman called it who sent me an email today on this particular issue. He said that is the true issue that we need to deal with.

Should this committee deal with that issue? Should this committee ask, "How are we able to make sure that we don't allow this back-door takeover by way of debt to happen so that we lose control of our natural resources industries here in Ontario?" That's just the one issue.

The bigger issue, and I think I started on that and I just touched on it at the beginning, is the issue of what happens with the people who are now in Toronto who are employed in the field of providing the services that junior mining companies and others use in order to list themselves on the stock exchange and to do the work that needs to be done to drive that.

Ontario has become one of the world leaders when it comes to mining, and most of those people reside here in Toronto. Those activities are big, value-added jobs that pay large salaries, that rent space in our commercial buildings in downtown Toronto and provide much in the way of being able to raise capital here in the province of Ontario for the junior mining companies and others.

I say that one of the things we're going to have to take a look at is: What is this going to mean to those firms that are in Toronto that currently are employed in the field of providing financing and the legal requirements to list stocks on the TSX? If we move to the London exchange, is that going to change? We need to hear from people on that point, because if it is the case that they're going to change, and I would suspect it is, this may not be a good deal for Ontario. Maybe we've got to turn this whole

thing on its head and say, "Well, you know, the TSX is not exactly a bit player in the stock market business, as compared to London." We're of about equal size, or pretty close to. Maybe we need to say, "Maybe the TSX becomes the driver and we run by Ontario rules, Canadian rules." Maybe that's what we need to say. I don't know. I don't advocate that at this point, but that's a question that I think we need to take a look at. I say to my friends that it's something that we're going to have to spend some time on to be able to take a look at what needs to be done in order to make sure that Ontario's interests are protected.

I really believe, in conclusion, that the government's process that they've basically put in place, when it comes to hearing this through a select committee, is commendable to a degree. But to say that we've got four days of hearings and we've got to make a final report by March 10 on an issue that's fairly complex, and people are not going to have a chance to really get their heads around this, is giving this short shrift. That's why I have moved the amendment to have an interim report filed by March 10 and then have a final report tabled here at the assembly by June 2, in order for the committee to have an opportunity to give this issue full review so that we're able to take a look at what makes sense for Ontario and we don't jump into this without our eyes open, understanding what the consequences are for the province of Ontario and specifically for the mining industry of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** As we've been discussing this afternoon about the select committee, this will be an all-party legislative committee. Its review will report on its observations and recommendations concerning the impact and net benefit to Canada, including Ontario, its economy and its people; Toronto's financial services sector, which is incredibly important to the province; and, of course, northern Ontario's mining industry.

My colleague from the third party has indicated he feels that this process should be dragged out for some time and not completed until June. Unfortunately, my understanding is that the federal government has about a 45-day window of opportunity in which to report back and make its decision. If we took the advice of the member from Timmins-James Bay, we'd be here until June, and our advice would be unheeded by anyone because we would have no input.

The input that is valid and that will be useful to our Minister of Finance, our government, as well as the federal government, is useful only in its timeliness. We don't want to miss our opportunity as a province to have some say and make some recommendations, which is why the strict timelines have been put together in this motion.

Certainly, I've consulted with the other parties on moving this motion forward today. I appreciate that we are moving it forward this afternoon in a timely manner. I understand that the committee is hoping to start meet-

ing—the subcommittee as early as tomorrow—so that we can invite our guests to come and speak to this. I'm sure that those who are interested in this issue are following this issue very closely. Those in the financial sector and the mining sector are fully aware that this is a timely issue and that it needs to be addressed very quickly.

Therefore, I am very pleased that all three parties are speaking to this this afternoon and that we will have this committee look into this issue which is of great interest to the province of Ontario and come back with recommendations that will allow us to put forward Ontario's view on this potential merger and how it will impact our province, our resources, our people, and our financial sector, and will put forward the best recommendations for our province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to enter into the debate this afternoon on this government motion to create a select committee. But before I get going, I would like to note that we have a new page from Parry Sound–Muskoka here in the Legislature, Sadie Honderich from Huntsville, whom I just had the opportunity to meet. I want to welcome her to Queen's Park and hope she has a great time here as the page representing Parry Sound–Muskoka.

This afternoon we're debating a motion that's essentially setting up a select committee to look at the proposed merger of the TMX Group and the London Stock Exchange. The TMX Group owns the Toronto Stock Exchange.

As was just mentioned by the government House leader, it is a fairly tight timeline. The committee is going to be holding public hearings—let's see here; oh, here we are, the times—March 2 and 3 and March 9 and 10, according to the order of the House, a fairly tight timeline to evaluate this transaction from an Ontario perspective.

I would point out that for this merger to go ahead, there are many, many approvals in the process. There's federal approvals: the Investment Canada Act, the Competition Act. Other than this committee that's going to look at it, there's also the Ontario Securities Commission, the Quebec Autorité des marchés financiers, the Alberta Securities Commission, the British Columbia Securities Commission. It also needs Canadian court approval in relation to the plan. There's approval required in the United States' Hart-Scott-Rodino act, in the UK through the Financial Services Authority, in Italy from the Commissione Nazionale per le Società e la Borsa, and also shareholder approval. So there's a long process of approvals, of which the Ontario government's is one part.

I would simply say at this point that we're just debating this motion to form a committee to look at it, and we're supportive of that. We have a couple of our key members—Mr. Klees, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, and also the member from Thornhill, Mr. Shurman, are representatives from the PC Party on this committee.

As the member from Newmarket–Aurora stated, though, we're hoping that the committee is going to take an objective look at this merger and that it's not a foregone conclusion what the result will be, because the financial sector certainly is a very important sector in Ontario, in Toronto and in Canada. In Toronto, there are some 300,000 people employed in the financial sector: 20% of the gross domestic product.

**1700**

What we're talking about is the merger of two companies that own stock exchanges. However, the reason I raise the concern about hoping that it's not a foregone conclusion and the government has already made up their mind, is that it's too important, and I think what we all should be looking for is what is in the best interests of the province of Ontario.

Right off the bat, Mr. Duncan, the finance minister, seems to be playing a bit of politics with it. Barely a day after it was announced, he was making headlines like "TSX Merger Bad for Small Business" and "Duncan Demands Proof TSX-LSE Merger Won't Boost Costs for Canadian Companies." There's a quote in here that I would say is a little bit inflammatory if you're really trying to look out for the best interests of the province. "What they should be doing is acting and thinking about what is in the best interests of the country," Mr. Duncan told reporters on Tuesday. "I think they need to engage in a more rational debate as opposed to fearmongering." So he's kind of accusing the companies of fearmongering.

In reaction to that, I would simply say that I'm certainly not an expert on this, nor would I say are any members of the Legislature. We should be getting experts in to make comment.

We've had some people in the news already comment. We had Mr. Thomas Caldwell, of Caldwell Financial Group, who certainly took issue with the finance minister. I'll read from a CBC article that states, "TSX-LSE merger stalled by politics...."

"Caldwell, founder and chair of Caldwell Financial Ltd., primarily took issue with criticism expressed by Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, who was the first out of the gate with doubts about whether the merger would benefit Canada...."

"The Ontario minister also went on to express his doubts about the Middle East 'owning' the stock exchange.

"Caldwell, whose company has holdings in both TMX Group and the LSE, called Duncan's comments 'odd,' and he goes on to say why he thinks it's a good idea. As I say, this is very important, and so we should not be playing politics with it.

Mr. Caldwell suggests that these are some of the arguments in favour of a TSX-LSE merger:

"The listings, the fundraising, the corporate finance will still be done in Toronto.

"It gives 'easier access to Canadian companies, easier access to European and Middle East funding via the London Stock Exchange, that would be a tremendous economic boom.'

"The LSE does not have a derivatives platform, that is, options, and Montreal does. So they're going to be using the Montreal system and staff to build their product in Europe.

"Quebec may actually get jobs out of this.

"We are going to have a greater selection of investments quite possibly, and greater access to capital."

Obviously, the points he's making are that there are net benefits for both the LSE and the TMX Group and for both countries. I think that's the kind of thing this committee should be looking at to establish whether that is in fact the case.

You look at the stock exchange history and note that, of late, globalization in technology has spurred an increase in mergers of stock exchanges. Initially mergers happened in Europe. For example, in March 2000, the consolidation of the Brussels, Amsterdam and Paris exchanges led to Euronext, and right now, of course, we have the New York Stock Exchange looking at merging with the Deutsche Börse of Germany—that's also in the news—and I believe that Australia and Singapore are looking at merging.

"What are the factors that are driving the traditional stock exchanges to seek mergers? Firstly, the development of alternative trading systems ... which operate outside the stock exchanges but perform the same function of bringing buyers and sellers together. ATS are able to offer lower transaction costs and gained market share at the cost of traditional stock exchanges. Mergers can enable stock exchanges to lower costs."

That's obviously completely contrary to Mr. Duncan saying that it would boost costs. This article on why they're happening says, "Mergers can enable stock exchanges to lower costs. Firstly, there are huge technology savings.

"Once two exchanges are merged there will be no need for two separate technology platforms. Hence, there will be fewer technology development, maintenance and manpower costs. Secondly, inter-listing of companies will be possible. This will enable the companies to tap capital and increased revenue for the merged stock exchange through higher listing fees. Thirdly, increased liquidity will lower the costs of issuing equity and also trading costs for retail investors. The lower costs will enable the traditional stock exchanges which have been losing revenue to compete with alternative trading systems like Omega, Chi-X etc....

"But these factors cannot deter the continuing spree of stock exchange mergers as benefits clearly outweigh risks." That's the opinion of one article, but we can see where the history of this is coming from.

In the short time I have available, because I think Mr. O'Toole would like to speak a bit about this new committee that's being formed as well, I would just like to note some of the surveys of businesses out there which are probably more tuned into whether this is a benefit or not.

Last week, it being a big news item, the Globe and Mail had a substantial article in the Saturday edition, and

they did an informal survey. "The Globe and Mail contacted every company in the S&P/TSX 60 index, along with a number of major institutional investors, private companies and smaller firms, to gauge the level of support for the \$7-billion merger. The informal survey suggests there is broad approval for the deal among senior Canadian corporate leaders in a number of sectors—along with a few reservations."

Going further down the article, "But reaction from CEOs and chief financial officers suggests that executives at many of Canada's largest public companies do not want politicians to step in." They're concerned about politicians just jumping into this and not necessarily being rational.

"When citing potential benefits of the deal, more-efficient trading and access to capital were at the top of executives' lists....

"But the Globe's survey shows that the exchanges would be wise to disclose more, and do a better job of explaining it, as they fight for their deal to go through....

"A number of executives across various sectors said it would be difficult for them to argue that Canada should block any deal, given that they are expanding into other countries themselves."

This survey of many of the companies across the country indicates there's a great deal of support for this merger.

Another article in the Globe and Mail on the topic noted that "If consummated and approved, the TMX-LSE deal would unite two exchanges that list some of the world's largest mining companies. London lists producers like Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton, while Toronto is the home market for large players such as Barrick Gold and Teck Resources. The combined market value of LSE and TMX would be about \$6.9 billion."

They quote from a leading mining executive who happens to be from Parry Sound. I have a home in Parry Sound-Muskoka. Tye Burt gave a quote for the article. "This a natural evolution of global capital markets," said Tye Burt, chief executive officer of Kinross Gold Corp., one of Canada's largest gold miners. "From a global and Canadian mining perspective, it appears to be a positive development, as it brings together the world's two leading capital markets for mining, and has the potential to give Canadian-based mining companies greater exposure to European investors."

I think I'm just about done talking about this subject for today, because I know Mr. O'Toole would like to add some comments as well.

As the member for Newmarket-Aurora stated, we should be looking at what's in the best interests of the province of Ontario. I frankly don't think this is a matter where there are a lot of votes won or lost, but it is important to the province.

I look forward to the work of the committee in getting the expert testimony and trying to determine if there are concerns that should be taken into consideration. I look forward to the results of that committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I also want to acknowledge that this is kind of an arcane sort of topic here because a lot of members know how important the capital market is. They also probably themselves are concerned about the success of the market and how that plays out.

I can only say that my good friend here from Halton and I are of that generation that certainly have a mixed portfolio, mostly on the downside at the moment. The point being, though, that I think broadly, members are interested and we all want the right decision.

1710

I will say at the outset here that our members who just spoke—of course, the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka is our finance critic. He's sort of removing himself to take the broader, the 30,000-foot view of the issue and listen carefully. He could easily have imposed himself on the committee with Mr. Shurman from Thornhill and Mr. Klees from Newmarket—Aurora. I'm confident that Mr. Shurman, who speaks often here on the economic critic file and does a formidable job of monitoring both the economic numbers and the employment numbers—but my good friend from Halton has done that for years here and done a commendable job. In fact, he's just sharing his skills often. I would only say that it's important.

This motion is really about setting up a committee. We're of the mind that that's a good move. In fact, I would say it's an educational move, and I would probably encourage all members, including myself and the member from Halton—we said we'll be watching carefully, only to learn, because it's a complex issue.

I remember the first course I took in monetary theory some time ago, and I'm probably one of the ones who need more training. What is money? Money is a temporary store value. It's sort of an economics 101; it's a monetary theory course 101. Then, it's "What is money?" The dollars, I'm saying, are a medium of exchange.

Right now, if you listen and watch around the world, there's a monetary crisis. Everybody's cheating on currency. That's what's going on. If you read *The Economist* from, I think, around October of last year, they talked after the meltdown about the US dollar going down and the Canadian dollar going up in relation—the basis of trading. It became evident that when they financed the TARP program in the US for the bailout, there was \$3 trillion of money printed. Now, how come it was printed? It actually devalued the US dollar. That's what happened.

Who held that debt, the promissory provisions of printing money based on some kind of commitment? It was China. That's why Barack Obama has been to China a couple of times to assure them that he's not going to pay them back with 50-cent dollars.

We see in our economy the impact of money—this is important, the impact of our economy with the value of the dollar, and also the access to market. What is the

point of a market? My good friend from Halton and I were talking just informally here. What's the point of the market? It's to raise capital. So they're going to float a new issue—and my son-in-law, who is a securities lawyer; he was with Cassels Brock. Now he's in London. He works for the largest securities firm in the world, in London, England.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** London?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes. London, England. I talked to him just recently about this. I think it's fascinating; again, as a practical investor.

I remember I took the Ontario securities course probably 20 years ago. It was before I came here, because I was at the point where I had shares as part of where I worked and I wanted to know about some of the options you have. I didn't really know much about how to buy shares. In fact, the first time I bought shares, I remember I said, "I'll have 100." I meant \$100 worth; I ended up getting 100 shares because that's one unit, more or less. You buy them in lots of 100, basically. It turned out it was a good decision, because it was Laidlaw, and Laidlaw transportation went up and did three splits, and the 100 shares ended up being 500 shares because once they split you have 200 and then you have, when they double—so I had 500 shares after 100 shares, and I sold them. I bought them at about \$9 or \$11 or something like that and sold them at \$25 or \$30, all by mistake. I had no clue. In fact, I'm sort of a buy-and-hold and sort of investor, which has not been a good idea as I still have General Motors shares.

I think the important thing here is, what's the market? This merger is really so complex in terms of whether it's the right thing. The first thing our leader, Tim Hudak, said was, "You know, we have to look at this objectively." What was the first thing that the Minister of Finance did? He starts to criticize. I was surprised and others were surprised as well.

I hope they listen to the work of this committee. I have the greatest respect for the people that our leader has put on that committee: Mr. Klees and Mr. Shurman. I know that Mr. Chudleigh would have done an excellent job. I say that with all due respect. In our caucus, he's the only guy who really sits on the pension advisory committee and other committees like that.

I think it's important—I would have liked, this morning, to have gone to the remarks made by Howard Wetston. He spoke this morning at the Economic Club of Canada here in Toronto. I'm just going to quote, because it's easier.

I can recall when Howard Wetston became—he was part of the Ontario Securities Commission. He's now the chair, which is very respectable. I had the opportunity, when I was assistant to the Minister of Finance, when Jim Bradley—Jim Bradley, jeez. Lord forbid. Heaven forbid.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Bite your tongue.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Bite my tongue—to actually meet with David Brown when he was chair of the OSC. They were looking at partial windup rules on things—it was

called the Monsanto case. We were looking at partial windup rules. I've seen the work done by Purdy Crawford and the Wise Persons' Committee. The number of real experts, both in law and financing, is very interesting. It's humbling when you see these guys.

It was quite interesting, to really bring this into some sort of focus here, that in the background here that I was seeing is the argument on the single regulator. Now, I'm looking over and Mr. Phillips, who's a guy I respect—he's a minister and I think the chair of cabinet, Chair of Management Board, something like that. He's minister without portfolio and in charge of everything. He's sort of like Greg Sorbara: in the background on everything. He's sort of got his fingerprints on most files, and I say that respectfully.

But here's what I'm saying. It's hardly appropriate—listen, I've been on lots of select committees over 15 years. They've never been chaired by a minister, ever. Now, that's not impugning any kind of motive. It's just suspicious. The chair of cabinet is going to chair the committee. I think he gets his marching orders from the Premier. I think Dwight has kind of recused himself from any discussion, because he has already decided he's against it. So we'll have to watch carefully.

Tom Caldwell: I thought Mr. Caldwell, who my boss had once been on a panel with—in fact, I did all the listening. Here's what he said: “Mr. Duncan's aggressive”—just a minute. “With an air of skepticism about the proposed marriage of the Toronto and London ... exchanges, Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan challenged the dealmakers to prove it would not become more costly for businesses to list their shares. Mr. Duncan's aggressive approach followed a CBC ... interview last weekend with Bay Street veteran Tom Caldwell, founder of Caldwell Financial Ltd.”—a very respectable man in the community broadly, even without this acronym of his company—“who took a few digs at the finance minister's questions about the merger. Caldwell quipped”—and I'm quoting here. “Caldwell quipped”—this is important—“Mr. Duncan has never visited the Toronto Stock Exchange ... I don't even think he knows the ... address.” Okay? Be careful of what you're speaking. That's why today I'm in humble deference to those experts who will do all that hearing. I think it's important that we hear from Mr. Caldwell, and these people should almost be subpoenaed.

I've looked at the merger information. I've looked at the articles from February. This is in thespec.com: “TSX Merger”—and this is the NDP position; there's Andrea Horwath.

“I do believe the control will rest with the other side,” he said and added these are the kinds of questions that need to be explained in greater detail. Duncan said he spoke with his counterparts in Ottawa and Montreal and was briefed by representatives of the TSX and the London exchange earlier this week. “We don't understand the whole deal; we need a better understanding of it.” I think that's a fair comment, our finance minister saying exactly what Mr. Caldwell said.

I think the hearing, as long as we approach it objectively and with the sense of trying to do the right thing—here's the next most important comment. Minister Clement has been in the media. Minister Flaherty has been in the media. These are the federal counterparts on this. They will ultimately make the final decision, I guess. They have both acknowledged the sovereignty issue. Canada has been cited around the world for having a paramount sort of monetary system, with the recent meltdown in the economy in the world, basically. Canada has withstood a lot of that.

1720

I think the content of this particular thing is really to educate with this motion, with a committee that is going to be struck. I believe, it's going to meet very—there's an amendment moved by the NDP; I won't speak to the amendment. The motion says they'll have to report by April 7; that gives them the month of March, by the time they get the committee, and they do the advertising. They're supposed to meet for four days of public hearings in Toronto and allow participants from across Ontario and Canada to participate via Web conference or video conference and by writing submissions due by March 10.

March 10 is moving really quickly on a very complex subject. Then you get to read these submissions. I can tell you they're going to be different for many of us to read. There are very technical things here. You might want to call in Purdy Crawford and a few people who actually know what they're talking about to help—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** There's the House leader over there quipping again. It's fine for her to make those snide, cheap remarks, but I'm not sure they're appropriate for this debate. Really, it's that attitude that really makes me feel saddened—

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Put that finger down.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Mr. Levac, from Brant, is saying the same thing. We wore the shirt today, and everyone got along. Don't be so malicious. What do you gain by it, David?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I would say you should yourself listen sometimes to what you say.

All I'm trying to say here is that this is an educational experience that this committee is charged with. For me, the travel, I'm not sure; perhaps they should see London. Perhaps they should go to London to meet with some of the principals on that side of the pond.

In my view, there's a few things that have been said that I would want to make sure are on the record. Our finance critic, Mr. Miller, has put most of this on the record, but it's important to realize that the total value of this deal is large; it's \$6 billion. It's a little less than the Samsung deal that was signed with the Korean firm Samsung as part of resolving our electricity issues.

Now, the TMX is the TSX, and there's another exchange within that. It's the parent of the TSX, the TMX. It's worth about \$2.9 billion, and the London

Stock Exchange is valued at about \$3.25 billion. The resulting merger has been valued at \$6 billion, and the merger would operate nine separate exchanges with 6,700 listings. TMX shares gained 10% on February 9 in reaction to the news. Xavier Rolet, current London Stock Exchange CEO, would be the new CEO of the merged companies. Thomas Kloet, the current TMX CEO, would be the new president. Ottawa has 45 days to complete a review after it receives a formal merger application.

As I said, Howard Wetston has spoken on this and will actually have a fair amount to say, but they have resolved that they will not have public hearings—that's the Ontario Securities Commission—until afterwards. A push here for the single regulator in Canada, which has been a federal initiative, is going to be reviewed by the Supreme Court, I think in April sometime. That is important. The initiative for Toronto being the headquarters, the financial capital of Canada, if you will, is being led by Janet Ecker, former finance minister. I think those are all parties that should be a part of this.

Even the definitions that we've read on the composition of this proposed board of 15 members: There's eight from the LSE which, of course, also includes the Italian exchange; I think it's two voting members from the Italian board. That means that Ontario, Canada, would have five. But all of this is predicated on these hearings, the governance structure, the ownership provisions and access to market.

I think I go back to first principles here that the real issue will be the sovereignty issue. When you look at not just Ontario but indeed Canada, and what we're comparing to, all of the exchanges around the world are in the midst of great discussions. For instance, in the brief time I have left, putting this in context, it's global. This is not Ontario, this is not London.

The New York Stock Exchange merged with Equinix in a complex transaction in 2006. At that time, NASDAQ attempted to purchase the London Stock Exchange, so that's not the first marriage or lack of, and there's speculation that the New York Stock Exchange might still have interest in the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The reason why all of this becomes rather murky is, it's raising capital—the larger the market, the larger the listings, the larger the revenue base. Where does the revenue come into this? The exchanges themselves make huge amounts of revenue by taking fractional shares on each transaction, and those transactions, the more of them you have, the larger your revenue stream, and that's a very complex—which values the exchanges themselves.

A very appropriate question is the control of the exchanges, who gets listed, and there's a lot to be said on that part as well.

I think the one other condition that Ontario has high regard for is that we in Ontario have a large mining exchange, and the resource section strictly has a lot to do with this transaction. Also, keep in mind that one third of

the London exchange is on mining indexes themselves and a lot of trading is done in China through the London exchange. Companies in Ontario and, indeed, Canada that want to be listed on the London exchange might have more exposure to larger pools of capital, and there are other rules about ownership provisions under the Ontario Securities Commission.

I think it's an important exercise. I hope I haven't offended anyone. I haven't taken any offence to the remarks that may have been made or directed to me. I think it's important that we put on the record how important it is to be objective and listen to the experts during these hearings, and I'm sure that the committee that's being comprised will be doing just that.

The time frame is, I think, fairly short, but again, this whole transaction, I think, has a provision for 45 days of review at the federal government level. I wish all those participants good luck and I hope we all become a little bit more educated in this transaction.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak? If not, we will first deal with the amendment moved by Mr. Bisson.

Mr. Bisson has moved that the motion be amended as follows:

“By adding clause c.1 as follows:

“c.1 Conduct up to four days of travel for the purpose of holding public hearings in Ontario mining communities, this travel to take place during one or more of the recess periods between March 10 and May 5; and

“By deleting the words “its final report to the assembly by April 7, 2011,” and replacing them with “an interim report to the assembly by March 10, 2011, and its final report to the assembly by June 2, 2011;” and

“By adding after the words “to commission reports; and” the following:

“That the dates, locations and times for public meetings in Ontario mining communities be established by subcommittee;”

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it. It's defeated.

We'll now deal with the main motion.

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 53. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Orders of the day? Government House leader.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House is adjourned until Thursday, February 24, Thursday, at 9 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1729.*

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<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
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<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

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<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) <b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
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Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) <b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
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<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

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Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
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Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
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Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on the proposed transaction of the TMX  
Group and the London Stock Exchange Group / Comité  
spécial sur la transaction proposée entre le Groupe TMX et le  
London Stock Exchange Group**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Frank Klees  
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs  
Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown  
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips  
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day



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No. 85

N° 85

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 24 February 2011

Jeudi 24 février 2011

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
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Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 24 February 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 24 février 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL À LA COMMISSION DE TRANSPORT DE TORONTO

Mr. Sousa moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission / Projet de loi 150, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail à la Commission de transport de Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** It's a privilege to rise to speak to Bill 150, the Toronto Transit Commission Labour Disputes Resolution Act.

The legislation we are considering today follows a request by Toronto city council that the TTC be made an essential service. We said we would take this request seriously, and we did; we said we would consult with those affected, and we did; and we said we would act quickly, given the time constraints, and we have.

We have listened to representatives of the city, to the bargaining agents involved and to the Toronto Transit Commission. Most importantly, we have listened to the 1.5 million people who rely on the TTC every business day. That's 1.5 million reasons why we need to act. This proposed legislation is all about helping the people of Toronto, ensuring their needs are met and protecting their safety, their health and their well-being.

We have received written confirmation from the city of Toronto—from the elected representatives of the people of Toronto—that the city continues to stand behind its motion of December 16, 2010, requesting the province to ban TTC work stoppages. I would like to read part of that motion asking the government of On-

tario to acknowledge the truly unique impact that TTC work stoppages have on the city.

The motion adopted by the TTC board on December 15, 2010, stated in part: "Over one million Torontonians rely on the TTC to get to work, school and conduct their lives each day. The city of Toronto is simply not designed to function without an operating ... transit system...."

"TTC strikes are an economic, social and environmental disaster that grinds the entire GTA to a standstill. The cost of transit strikes in Toronto has been estimated to be \$50 million per day in lost economic activity. The environmental harm caused by the complete absence of transit and thousands of additional vehicles on the road is incalculable."

We have said that we would act quickly, given the fact that the agreements between the TTC and its bargaining agents expire on March 31, 2011. The TTC and its workers have a right to know what the rules of this bargaining round will be. And the people of Toronto, speaking through their elected representatives, have a right to ask the province that they be protected from the impact of TTC work stoppages now and in the future. We have the largest city in Canada saying, through their city council, that they need the largest transit system in Canada functioning reliably.

Across this country and over the course of decades, provinces have deemed certain workers essential. In these instances, the appropriate step to take is to have a fair and neutral system of binding arbitration. In Ontario and across Canada, police, firefighters and hospital workers have been considered to be essential to their communities. The city of Toronto has said to us that without their transit system, the city simply cannot function as it should.

Since 1974, members of this chamber have been called upon five times to enact back-to-work legislation for the TTC—five times. Clearly, this speaks to a unique situation in Toronto when it comes to public transit. Clearly, this unique situation has been acknowledged by this House, acknowledged by the people of Toronto and by the people of Ontario. The province's largest city requires its vital transit system.

There are those who have expressed concern that this bill could result in unionized transit workers receiving higher wages through binding arbitration. I'm sure that members of council are also aware of those concerns. Nevertheless, the city of Toronto made this request. It is important to remember that ultimately the city is responsible for the operation of the TTC and for negotiating with the TTC's bargaining units. Furthermore,

members of this House should know that city council defeated a motion calling on the province to finance any additional cost that the city may incur as a result of their request.

It is not our place to settle specific terms of those collective agreements. Rather, we are here protecting the people of Toronto at their request. Our government believes in the value of collective bargaining. Under this legislation, that important process will continue. The best settlements are those made at the bargaining table. We also know that in cases where society deems the services of certain workers essential to the safety, health and well-being of its people, issues not resolved at the bargaining table are best put before an independent and impartial arbitrator.

This bill, if passed, like all other statutes governing compulsory interest arbitration in the public sector, specifies criteria that arbitrators must consider. In particular, arbitrators would have to consider the employer's ability to pay and the economic situation in Ontario and Toronto. In general, under this bill, Ontario's Labour Relations Act would continue to apply to labour relations between the TTC and its union. The parties would still go behind closed doors and negotiate a new collective agreement. However, in cases where the parties reach an impasse in collective bargaining, outstanding issues would be resolved through the fair and neutral third party process of binding interest arbitration.

As I stated, compulsory interest arbitration is already in place for our police, firefighters and within the hospital sector. Those workers have a right to bargain, and they do bargain. From January 2000 to January 2011, there were more than 6,000 settlements involving parties who are subject to binding arbitration. Almost 80% of those settlements were successfully bargained without progressing to arbitration. I reiterate: The best collective agreements are those reached at the bargaining table. This bill does not take away the right to bargain. The TTC and its unions are still encouraged to negotiate collective agreements. As always, our provincial mediators are available to assist. Our goal and interest is public safety and health and the well-being of all concerned.

As the provincial government, we have a responsibility to acknowledge the request made by us, by a mature partner government, to consider the impact acting on this request will have on the parties involved, and above all else to ensure that the public interest is met. The bill we are proposing today is the result of these considerations. It is a fair bill, a bill that is neutral, a bill that has the best interests of the people of Toronto in mind.

0910

Binding interest arbitration is a fair and impartial way to resolve collective bargaining issues when they cannot be resolved at the bargaining table. As mentioned, the introduction of this legislation comes after consultations with the city, the TTC and all of the bargaining agents involved. The request from the city and the input provided during consultations was seriously and thoughtfully considered. A request of this nature deserves no less. This is

a serious matter. The ability of the 1.5 million people who rely on the TTC every business day to get to work, school, medical appointments and home safely is of paramount importance.

Let's be clear: This proposed legislation has been introduced to address Toronto's specific needs and concerns as they relate to its transit system, public health and safety and the economy. We are addressing a truly unique situation. The TTC is North America's third-largest public transit system. Only those in New York City and Mexico City are larger.

When we speak of the 1.5 million people who ride and rely on the TTC every business day, we should remind ourselves who we are actually speaking about. It is not simply those who choose to take public transit to get to work or travel from one part of the city to another. For many, there is no alternative. There are many without cars. There are those more vulnerable and poor who cannot afford taxis or parking, let alone a car. There are seniors. There are children. There are students. There are many for whom the TTC is not only their primary means of transportation; it is their only means of transportation.

Their destinations are also something we considered. There are health care workers who ride the system to get to their job at hospitals, nursing homes and clinics. With 40 hospitals, 84 long-term-care homes and 21 community care centres across the greater Toronto area, the city of Toronto itself has the largest concentration of hospitals, nursing homes and health care facilities in the entire province and, in fact, in Canada. Many of those who staff these facilities get to work every day by public transit. Without the TTC, many of the people who staff Toronto's hospitals would have no way to get to work. We considered the operating rooms and the emergency rooms and the long-term-care facilities and the retirement homes. And what about the many home care health workers who need to get to their patients and clients and rely on the TTC?

The primary job of any government should be the safety, health and well-being of its people, and I believe Toronto's and Ontario's record of legislating the TTC back to work shows that the health of Ontarians has been and is a priority for this province. A vital element of our health system is a vital transportation link that health care workers depend on to get to their jobs. To deny that the people of Toronto need the TTC is to deny the reality that the city faces today and the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our society. A serious and responsible review of the situation leads fair-minded people to the same conclusion: For the city of Toronto, the disruption and loss of its transit system is far, far more than an inconvenience.

There are other health and safety concerns to take into consideration as well. There are the children and teachers who take the TTC to school. There are the parents struggling to manage their time, who rely on the TTC to get to work to provide for their families. There are the single parents rushing to take their children to daycare. There are those, including many of our most vulnerable, who

don't have cars and need to take the TTC to medical appointments. An important role played by public transit is to make sure that all members of society have access to transportation, not just those with a driver's licence or those with a car.

This government has been consistent and steadfast in its commitment to our province's most vulnerable citizens, and in ensuring that we keep Toronto's transit system running we are standing by them. We have all seen and experienced the packed, congested roads and the major disruptions that accompany them in Toronto when the city has been brought to a near standstill by TTC work stoppages.

These disruptions are not only bad for the economy, they are bad for the environment as well. We know that the fewer cars there are on our roads, the better it is for our environment and our air quality. If we really want to encourage people to go green, to go carless, we can't at the same time tell them not to count on the largest transit system in our province's largest city. That just doesn't work. The TTC helps keep cars off the road and reduces the air pollution that our children, our seniors and those with frail health breathe.

The Toronto Transit Commission estimates that a subway train replaces over 900 cars at peak times on most system routes. The TTC also estimates that, on average, one bus replaces 50 cars, and a four-car Scarborough rapid transit system train at rush hour takes 200 cars off the road. It is obvious that public transit is a key element in our efforts to move to a more green, a more healthy society.

Automobile emissions have a significant impact on the environment, and TTC work stoppages have a major impact on automobile use. A 2008 report prepared for the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 113, estimated that without TTC services there would be over 178,000 additional cars on the road in Toronto and about 350,000 new car trips on any given business day. That is truly a lot of added pollution in our air. That is compelling, and truly an impact that the people of Toronto can understandably ask to be protected from. The matter before us includes the environmental as well as the financial impact on our citizens, and the city has expressed concerns to us about these very issues.

Mr. Speaker, 1.5 million people is a big number. Think of it this way: On the average business day, the TTC moves almost twice the number of people who live in the city of Ottawa. The Toronto Transit Commission is indeed unique among Ontario's urban transit systems. The TTC operates three subway lines and one rapid transit line, with a total of 69 stations, as well as about 150 bus and streetcar surface routes. Together, they move over 470 million passengers a year.

We know from past experience that work disruptions at the TTC severely affect the city's economy, and we are acutely aware of the importance Toronto has to the province's economy. Work stoppages at the TTC, according to a city of Toronto staff report issued in 2008, have an estimated economic impact of \$50 million every working

day. The impact of TTC service disruptions can send economic and environmental shockwaves across this province—that's at the macro level. On the street level, there are the pharmacy workers who need to get to work to serve customers who depend on their services. There are the low-income earners who need to get to the job and don't have cars. There are factories, offices, retail outlets and food stores across our largest city that rely on workers who depend on public transit.

I've told the members of this House that Toronto city council made a request, through a resolution, asking that the province designate public transit in Toronto as an essential service. That request, and this proposed legislation, originated with a public need expressed by the city to our government. Our government respects the right of the people of Toronto to address their needs through their elected representatives. Our response to the city of Toronto's request has taken into consideration the city's concern regarding the genuinely unique circumstances of Toronto and its transit system. As I've explained, these circumstances include the critical role the TTC plays in the lives of Torontonians and, indeed, in ensuring their health and safety.

Members of this House know that this proposed legislation addresses a unique and serious public need that has been addressed in this chamber before. I've spoken about the need to pass back-to-work legislation five times since 1974. We have to consider that while we were preparing and passing that legislation, the people of Toronto were left stranded. It's obvious for anyone to see that this is the reason Torontonians have come to us, through their city council, and asked for help.

0920

Our government firmly believes in the right of collective bargaining. We believe that the best collective agreements are those reached at the bargaining table. This proposed legislation would not take away or limit the right to bargain collectively. As I've already stated, when bargaining reaches difficult stages, our professional provincial mediators at the Ministry of Labour are available to assist the parties in reaching an agreement. This legislation would only prohibit strikes and lockouts. Nothing in this bill would prevent the parties from engaging in bargaining to resolve their collective agreements. Our bill would provide a fair and neutral means to resolve bargaining impasses: binding arbitration—the very same basic means of resolving impasses used by our police, our firefighters and our hospital workers.

The people of the city of Toronto are in the best position to determine how vital the TTC is to their lives. We have carefully considered the request of Toronto city council and consulted with the city, the TTC and its bargaining agents. After carefully and seriously reviewing the request, the reasons for it and the reality of the circumstances, we have responded in a way that is fair and measured.

I've already said that this is not about taking sides; it is about acting in response and in a responsible way to the people of Toronto and their council's request. It is

about looking out for the people of Toronto. That includes first and foremost looking out for their safety, their health and their well-being. It's about listening to the people of Toronto and their concern about the ability of their city to function effectively without the loss of their vital public transit system.

We have also had to consider that the contract between the TTC and its unionized workers will expire on March 31 of this year. With our proposed legislation, the parties would have a stable means of settling unresolved collective bargaining issues. More importantly, the public would have the benefit of uninterrupted access to vital TTC services.

Our government is proud of our record on labour issues. That's because our government has restored fairness and balance to labour relations. This Legislature would no longer have to resort to last-minute, ad hoc back-to-work legislation in order to resolve TTC labour disputes while the people of Ontario's largest city are left stranded.

Most recently, on a Sunday in 2008, all parties of this Legislature joined together to get the TTC up and running again. The PCs and the NDP have joined with our government to end strikes in the past, to ensure that the people of Toronto would have the transit system they rely on restored without further delay. Clearly, at the time the best decision was to legislate binding-interest arbitration, and it has been the best decision on four other occasions. All parties in this House have previously agreed that TTC work stoppages are unacceptable. Now that the Toronto city council has made the request to permanently avoid disruptions, it is time for action. This bill would foster stable labour relations and uninterrupted provisions of service by the TTC.

The city of Toronto motion requesting this legislation has also asked that a mandatory review of the legislation take place after five years. We listened, and so our bill calls for such a review to take place within one year of the fifth anniversary of its coming into force.

We have carefully and seriously considered the request from the city of Toronto to prohibit work stoppages on the TTC. We have consulted with the city, the TTC and its unions. We have considered the prior actions by all parties of this Legislature. We have listened to the people of Toronto, the province's largest city, say they need the largest transit system in Ontario to function without interruption so that the people can get through their day safely in a healthy environment and get to work. We have listened; we have acted responsibly in introducing this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I respect the Minister of Labour in his new role. Mr. Sousa is a very excellent speaker and, clearly, reading the speech as accurately as possible in terms of this government's position on the right to strike and the rights of unions at the stroke of a pen.

I think it's the right thing to do. As we all know, in the last few years there have been circumstances where

governments have been called back to in fact return the transit workers back to work. I think the other argument you could make in this whole scheme of things is that the arbitrated settlements are often higher. This is a cost, of course, that in a general sense is on the levy of the municipal level of the city of Toronto, certainly.

But I guess I have to look back at the contradictions. The member from Don Valley East earlier this year had a far-reaching intrusion into workplace harmony, if you will, saying that all transit systems should be dealt with this way. I wonder if, in his response, the minister might approach that because transit is kind of a number one capital investment that is going on. The amount of money being spent with Metrolinx—it's my understanding that Metrolinx and those capital investments are basically monopoly positions. They're quite tenuous, too, because when you look at, for instance, the GO train—I take the GO as much as possible, not every day but most days. I get a pass and stuff like that. There's CN, and that's a different worker situation. Then they've got the GO people on the trains themselves. They don't actually operate the trains. They just take tickets and check tickets, basically. It's quite complicated, who you're ordering back to work or how you're going to settle all these disputes because some of them are federally regulated organizations.

I think this is an approach to respond to Mr. Ford, and I'm anxious to hear our critic respond to Bill 150 this morning.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to first of all say that I don't envy the position of the new minister. He has to deal with this. I frankly think that this is simply a political move by the Liberal Party to salvage their 20 seats in Toronto. Speaking from a labour background, I can say that if it wasn't for unions and for their bargaining over the last 60 years, people would probably be working for about \$9 an hour and working 14 hours a day. I also believe that this legislation will set unions back 60 years. If you saw what happened yesterday in Minnesota—they caught a governor talking to someone who was pretending to be a big executive for Coke, I believe, and he didn't say very nice things about working people in his state and he didn't say very nice things about unions.

Is this the mentality of the hierarchy of governments? I'm not sure. I think what you're getting here—I also have papers here, which I will read further down the road as we discuss this, that the former leader of the Conservatives doesn't think it's a good idea. I will quote him on pages of why he thinks it's not such a good idea.

I can safely say that this is simply a political move to salvage seats. I think you're not—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Please. I don't want to see one Liberal stand up and say they respect collective bargaining. I don't want to see one Liberal say they respect unions because they don't. That's a farce. It's not true. They're going to set unions back 50 to 60 years with this man-

oeuvre. I really think that they're using intimidation; Ford is using intimidation and the Liberals are using intimidation to squash the unions' rights and squash unions throughout North America—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further questions and comments?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased to rise in support.

I appreciate the member opposite's perspective. I think it's important to recognize that this request comes from the council for the city of Toronto, who have made a decision that they would like to declare the TTC an essential service and they have asked us to put in place the necessary requirements for them to be able to do this. So what we said we would do is we would take this under serious consideration. We did have the conversations that took place with union members and also with members of council, and we decided to support the decision of the elected people of the city of Toronto.

0930

I think this is a really important part to recognize. There was an election in the fall. A municipal election took place, and there were proposals put forward. This was one of the proposals that had been spoken about all across the city of Toronto. The people of Toronto also spoke and they voted in a particular council. This resolution went to the council. It was debated at council. I'm sure my honoured friend across the way had an opportunity to speak and articulate his positions to that council, as many other folks have been able to do, but the council ultimately made a decision, and they are the elected individuals who govern the city of Toronto. What we were able to do was support that decision through the request, after we did our due diligence. So I think it's really important that as we move forward it is recognized that the city of Toronto and the councillors have asked for this. They are the ones who will then proceed as they move towards the essential service, and the conversations need to be held between the city of Toronto and the TTC membership.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Let me begin by congratulating the new Minister of Labour on introducing his first bill into the Legislature. I can remember having had that privilege when we were elected in 1995.

It's interesting to see this legislation come forward. I think, as has been said, this legislation is here before us to declare the TTC an essential service based on the fact that it has been requested by Mayor Ford and the Toronto city council. Obviously, it needs to move forward before the end of next month, and if you take a look at the response from the public—if you look at the Toronto Sun today, it says, "Are you happy with the province's legislation to declare the TTC an essential service?" There are 86% of the people that have indicated that they do support this. So obviously this is something—this move which we are now going to be debating, to declare the TTC is an essential service, is strongly supported by the

people in the city of Toronto. So it's moving forward, and I'm anxious to hear from our critic—the critic for labour—who will be sharing with the public and with this House our position on this legislation. But you know, regardless, this is an issue that is currently obviously well supported by the public.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The Minister of Labour has two minutes for his response.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you for the contributions by the members from Durham, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Etobicoke Centre and Kitchener–Waterloo. In regard to the request before us by the city of Toronto, it is unique in its nature to the province. It doesn't affect other municipalities or other agreements with other locations. It's strictly with regard to the TTC and the request by the city of Toronto, given the unique nature of the scope and size of the Toronto Transit Commission and the vital impact it has not just on the livelihoods and well-being of the people in the city of Toronto, but also on the health and safety issues.

I do want to comment on the rights of workers and the impacts it has and the fact that the collective agreements are continuing to be the course in regards to what we put forward. If an impasse occurs, then it goes to an arbitrator, but we are still going to respect the collective agreement process. We still encourage the collective agreement by which to proceed. We believe it's the best way when we achieve settlements. In the majority of cases where essential services legislation exists, over 80% of the time those collective agreements are agreed to and they do occur. We always support that process, and we'll have our professional mediators available should ever that be required.

Again, further to the comments made by some of the other members in this Legislature, this does come to us as an official request by the elected officials of the city of Toronto, based on the calls and the demands from their constituents. Given the severe impact it has on all people concerned, we have opted to proceed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's wonderful to welcome the new Minister of Labour with his first new bill, Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission.

I have to commend the minister, first off. Obviously, he has pretty significant skills, as he spoke with such clarity while having a crow in his mouth, because we all know that just a few months ago there was an essential services bill before the House by a member of the minister's own party, the member for Don Valley East. He brought in a bill to make the TTC an essential service and of course, he got absolutely no support from this Liberal government. But the minister was very clear in his articulation of the importance of this now priority for this little government.

I think it's really interesting to hear that it is now a priority. This is a priority after seven years of being in government—seven and a half years.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It seems longer.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes, much longer, on the backs of many people of Ontario.

In seven years, we have seen such a host of Liberal priorities: banning plastic bags, banning pit bulls, banning how many kids can be in the car. But now this is the priority.

I realize that—the minister makes some good arguments for this. We have had five labour disruptions with the TTC over the last number of years. There have been 11 lost days on the TTC. Who knows how many days would have been lost if the Legislature had not come back and voted on back-to-work legislation? But all of a sudden, this is now a priority. Why was it not a priority in 2008 when there was the last labour disruption? Where was the Liberal mindset then? Where was it a couple of months ago, with the member for Don Valley East?

But I will have to also commend—because it's not too often we see this from the Liberal government—that this government is now responding to the requests and the desires of a municipal government. I have to give you credit for that. Here we have a resolution passed by the Toronto council, clearly in line with the mandate that Mayor Rob Ford ran on and was elected on in the municipal election, to make the TTC an essential service, and this government is moving on that. On that, I commend you.

Again, I'm not sure, because we have seen so many requests by municipal governments for many, many action items from this Liberal government that fall on deaf ears. But this one seems to have caught the government's attention. Now, I guess somebody who might be cynical might suggest that it has something to do with the election this year. I don't know if that was really the motivator behind this bill: the Liberal government's own political fortunes or misfortunes that will happen this year.

When we talk about the request by municipal governments, many of them have made many representations to this Liberal government about the essential services and the labour laws that we presently have in place and the difficulties that they have in finding the funds to pay for the essential services. Anyway, we'll get into that in a little bit.

0940

The PC party did support, on second reading, the private member's bill of the member from Don Valley East when he proposed an essential services bill for the TTC, and we do support Mayor Rob Ford's efforts to respect the taxpayers of Toronto and to uphold his election mandate and commitments.

I want to get into a few of the details that aren't in the bill or haven't been addressed by this Liberal government, and I'd like to hear the minister's response to why these things aren't included in this legislation.

The first one I want to talk about is, here we have the TTC being designated as an essential service. It's clearly a hub for public transit, serving many, many people. He talks about the 1.5 million riders of the TTC. He talks

about the numbers of people in Toronto. But of course, what we also have to look at is all the feeders to the TTC. They're not being declared essential services under this legislation.

If you're on one side of Steeles, public transit is essential. On the other side of Steeles, public transit isn't quite so essential in this legislation. Public transit in Ottawa and London is not essential under this legislation, but it is in Toronto. The TTC is defined as essential. I'd like to know what it is in this government's mindset that makes the TTC stand in a different light than all the other public transit systems.

The other thing is, we have our own government of Ontario transit that feeds into the TTC, our GO system. Why is it not essential? Of course, the GO system is a major feeder into the TTC, a major mover of commuters. But there's no discussion, no mention, no talk of the importance of GO Transit.

I'm glad to see the minister taking notes on what we're speaking about here today, because I do believe these are important elements that need to be addressed, need to be spoken about and need to be rectified if there are failings within this legislation.

Of course, we will have time after second reading to have this bill in committee, explore those questions in some greater detail and see why people, the families in York region, are viewed in a different light than the people in Toronto, why the people in Mississauga are viewed in a different light than the people in Toronto and also why those other transit systems around the province, like I mentioned—London, Ottawa; they have all endured public transit strikes as well. The last one in Ottawa was a very significant, lengthy public transit strike. It caused a significant disruption in the middle of winter, but they didn't get back-to-work legislation then, and they're not included in this bill today.

I also want to speak about the binding arbitration aspect of this bill. The government has extracted a standard clause in the bill from other labour legislation, and that is on the criteria that require the arbitrator to consider the ability to pay of the city of Toronto and also the province of Ontario. This is a standard clause. We see it in every other essential services bill—those for police and firefighters.

I want to ask the minister this question specifically, because when I was being briefed by your officials yesterday—we know that the Ministry of Labour has received many, many undertakings and requests to have your arbitrators respect that intent of the ability to pay. I've heard it directly from all the municipal governments in my area, and I'm sure every member has heard it from every municipality in their own riding, that the arbitrator's view is that the ability to pay is not a restriction; the ability to pay is viewed as the ability to tax, and as long as you have the ability to tax, you have an endless ability to pay. We've seen this—and this is a fear and a concern that has been addressed by others, including yourself, and by Mayor Rob Ford, that an essential service increases the cost of that service. That is one of

the key reasons why, when we designate an essential service as such—the arbitrators don't recognize the difference between ability to pay and ability to tax.

So we know, we have a long history, demonstrated time and time again by all our municipal governments, that this clause is not strong enough; this clause is not respected; the intent is not brought forward. But what has this government done? It has disregarded those years of concerns, the endless number of resolutions and discussions, and has taken that exact, same clause that causes problems elsewhere and inserted it into a new piece of legislation. I believe that if this government was and is truly interested in bringing forward a good piece of legislation that respects the taxpayers of Toronto, respects the commuters, respects the mandate of the elected council, instead of rushing this bill into the House on the first day back, they would have taken a little time to see how they could strengthen that clause so that the ability to pay is not confused with the ability to tax.

I trust—because you've heard this from others—that there must be some working group within the ministry looking at some legal language to improve that clause. I would like the minister to explain to us why that clause has not been strengthened, why this bill has been brought in prematurely, if you are indeed working on strengthening that clause. Or is it the case that you're just not working on that language at all, that you're just not interested, that you just don't care. I trust and hope that that isn't the case. But if you are working on that language, then it is premature to bring this bill in. You should have waited a period of time to make sure you got things right.

I also want to mention—we know that the justification for this bill should be the request from the elected Toronto city council. That's what the motivation should be. That's where the request came from. When I was listening to your speech, I heard these words about priorities and different things, but I also heard that you are doing this because it's green. Did everybody hear that? They're bringing this bill in because it's green. Now, I don't know when we started confusing green with labour and green with collective bargaining. I know there's some confusion with green and windmills and different things, but now labour legislation is going to be green. That's a new one in the House.

0950

I guess I should say, as we've seen demonstrated, especially in the last number of months with the backtracks on the offshore wind and the backtracks on the microFIT programs, be careful of any bloody green contract you get into with this Liberal government, because it's not worth the paper that it's written on.

I'm not sure what's going on with the green transit plan and the green energy plan, but we do know that whenever the word "green" comes out of this Liberal government, chaos is sure to follow shortly afterwards.

There are a number of things that do need to be addressed in this legislation: once again, other public transit systems that feed into the TTC, the ability to pay and criteria so that it is not confused with the ability to tax. I

really think we should get off the high green horse here. I know the GO trains are green but, really, this is not a green bill.

We should not confuse people with the intent, the expectations and the motivations of this bill. This bill will hopefully end the disruption of commuters and stem the economic loss when those disruptions happen, but it's going to come with a cost; we're not sure what that is. We've seen that the government has not really put anything in there to protect the taxpayers of Toronto.

I guess the other thing we should say—I have to agree with the member from Hamilton, from the third party. As we hear the Liberals stand up and boast about how much they embrace collective bargaining on the same day that they're bringing in a binding-interest arbitration bill, we have to take that with a little bit of crow; there are a few feathers that are coming out of the windpipes on that one as well.

Let's keep it to the facts, let's keep it truthful and let's keep it honest. Let's deliver up a good piece of legislation that serves and benefits those who it's intended to without harming those who are left out of the bill.

With that, I'd like to hear back from the minister on those comments, those thoughts, on how we're going to deal with those subjects. I look forward to hearing a response.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm going to be beginning my one-hour lead in response to the minister in relatively short order, in approximately 10 minutes' time. Obviously, I'll only be able to start; I won't be able to finish it.

New Democrats don't support this legislation. Quite frankly, we're not surprised at the position taken by the Conservatives. Their position is consistent with a perspective and a philosophy that they've been articulate about and unashamed of for a good chunk of time. I disagree absolutely. New Democrats disagree absolutely with the position the Conservatives take, but on this issue, we've always disagreed. And I say that the Conservatives come to this debate—with however erroneous a position and philosophically flawed a position—with a history of integrity around the issue, because they've never pretended to be anything but in the position that they stand.

The Liberals, however, come to this debate with far less than candour and, quite frankly, with a level of cowardice, gutlessness, because when I hear the Liberal minister or one of his minions in the backbenches stand up and say, "Why, don't shoot the messenger. We're only doing this because the city of Toronto wants us to do it. Perhaps—we're leaving this for you to guess—we don't really believe in it." It's a hell of a way to make public policy.

Mayor Ford wants a prohibition on strikes by TTC workers. Well, look: My city council down in Wainfleet wants this government to add \$100 a month to the food allowance of people on social assistance. The township of Wainfleet passed a resolution to that effect just a

couple of weeks ago; I read it onto the record yesterday. Where is the government with respect to that proposition?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I do wish to respond to the previous speaker.

It's very interesting that when we were introducing legislation in response to a request from Toronto city council to declare the Toronto Transit Commission an essential service and refer all outstanding collective bargaining matters to binding arbitration—I think a lot of people here in this place this morning forget that there is a new city of Toronto council. If you respect democracy, then so be it. It is in place. Let Mayor Rob Ford and let the members of Toronto city council proceed as they see is the correct direction. They have done that, obviously after a lot of discussion and thought. They are proceeding in that direction and have asked us to proceed, in this Legislature, with that legislation. It's very important.

I think you heard very clearly this morning from the Minister of Labour how intricate the work has been and the references between all parties; that all parties are being included for due diligence. That message is coming forward to this forum.

I can tell you that I was surprised when I actually noted, from one of the opposition members, a reference to a Toronto media report which showed that 86% of the people of the city of Toronto—and there are 1.5 million riders—said, at 86%, “We want to have this legislated. We don't want the embarrassment, the trials, the tribulations and everything that has transpired in the past.” It's something we—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to add a few comments to the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington's. The honourable member spoke in reply to the minister's proposed Bill 150. I think he gave a good synopsis of some of our concerns with this bill.

I know one of the issues I have is the arbitrators taking into account the municipality's ability to pay. It seems kind of odd. I did some interviews just in the last couple of days with some of the press back home in my riding. I know that's a big issue there and in the London ridings as well. I'm sure we're going to hear about it next week at OGRA, the Ontario Good Roads Association, and ROMA, where municipalities are going to come. I'm sure that that issue, the ability to pay—arbitrators taking into account a municipality's ability to pay and not continually just telling the taxpayers to ante up and to put the tax rate up, to put the mill rate up to pay these bills. That's something I'm going to be looking at and I'm sure that we're going to have a lot to say as we go forward on that.

On the big issue, ability to pay, the criteria, we feel, in this bill are lacking in enough detail that they should be interpreted. The arbitrators apparently feel that they couldn't take any guidance on that because then they

would be being dictated to by the province. They won't seem to listen to the municipalities who, at the end of the day, bear the brunt of their decisions.

**1000**

I would urge the rest of the members, as we look at this bill, that we consider amendments to it, that we try to strengthen it and take into account—let's take a look at giving these arbitrators, if they won't take our advice, a stronger urge that way, that they take into account the ability of the employer to pay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I want to send a strong message to the people across the floor that this is not just about the ATU. You've got to understand that there are different unions within the ATU; you've got machinists, mechanics, CUPE workers. Do you think that by this forced legislation, this lack of transparency to talk about it with all these other groups, it's going to do you justice? I think not.

Do you think that's going to end a strike? Have you ever heard of work-to-rule? Have you ever heard of other disruptions that unions can do if they're not happy with what's going on? If you think this is just going to clean off unions with one stroke of the brush, it's not going to happen.

I'm sending out a warning to every card-carrying union member in Ontario and, more importantly, every union leadership: You should pay very close attention to what's going on here. Mr. McGuinty will strip you of whatever he wishes to for his own political gain. Stop supporting anti-union governments. Send Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal union-busters a strong message next October.

If you see what's going on in the States, in Minnesota, watch in the next few days what develops there, the mentality of the government leader there and the little phone discussion that they taped that he had.

There's a North American movement to break the backs of union members, and there's a North American movement by industry and big business to make everybody work for \$11 an hour. And do you know what's going to happen? Who's going to buy those houses, fridges, stoves and cars when you're working for \$11 an hour? Nobody. This is going to have a negative effect, it's going to be non-productive and it's going to come back and bite you all in your taxes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to thank the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, the member for Simcoe-Lambton, the member for Welland and—who else did we have?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Ajax.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Ajax-Pickering. Thank you.

I think there are good comments coming from the third party as well. I'll just reflect a little bit on my time when I was a member of a union, when I was a member

of the IBEW. At that time, we had a little adage that a union got the employer it deserved, and the employer got the union it deserved.

The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek made a good point. Passing legislation does not create labour harmony. It doesn't do that at all. It does create some certainty. It creates some stability. But it doesn't create labour harmony.

I do believe that what we've seen in the last number of years, in the last decade or so, is that our public sector unions have not kept up to pace with our private sector unions. Very seldom do we see private sector unions going on strike nowadays in relation to our public sector unions, and that speaks to a bigger, broader principle and failing that this government has not looked at in this bill. It has not looked at, in the total context, how we bring our public sector unions—move them along in the same vein as the private sector unions, recognizing that strikes are not the be-all and end-all; that there needs to be some labour harmony.

But I am looking forward to the minister's response on those other questions that I offered earlier.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker. Unfortunately, as you know, I've only got 10 minutes this morning until you have to adjourn for question period, but I'll be back, I suspect, on Monday afternoon.

I want to make it clear once again at the outset that New Democrats are not supporting this legislation. We'll have no part of what is an assault, and part of a history of assaults, on the rights and interests of working people in this province, across this country and, indeed, throughout North America over the course of the last, yes, almost two decades.

I was prompted to recall the old RCA Victor ad, the painting of the Victrola with the big horn speaker and the dog, the little fox terrier, sitting at the Victrola with its nose into the horn of the Victrola. The title of that painting—it was an ad before the time of many of you, but when I was a kid, RCA Victor used this as its logo, as its promotional piece, and had since the 1920s. It was an ad with this little dog, a terrier, sitting in front of the Victrola, and it was entitled *His Master's Voice*.

Now we learn that Rob Ford is the master and the minister is but his voice. I learned that the name of the dog is Nipper, if that's any comfort to the minister. So I say to the minister, or Nipper, as he more appropriately ought to be known, that we clearly hear him and his colleagues saying, "Don't blame us." They're like the little boy who soiled the bed. They insist they have nothing to do with it in the morning. "Don't blame us. It wasn't me. I wasn't there. It's all that Rob Ford." Hell's bells, as if any of these people were out there campaigning for Rob Ford during that mayoralty election.

This chamber, of course, wasn't sitting, but Parliament was absent any Liberal members. They were all out there campaigning for one George Smitherman, the losing candidate. I'm not sure Smitherman's position would have

been any different than Rob Ford's at the end of the day because Smitherman, of course, got himself into a campaign where he had to out-right-wing Rob Ford. He couldn't outweigh him in the ring, but he had to out-right-wing him, although he probably tried in both respects.

So here we have Rob Ford calling the shots for Queen's Park. I find that a remarkable thing to happen, a very disturbing thing to happen, and one hell of a way to set public policy that has impact far beyond the city of Toronto and far beyond the ATU and its sister and brother unions representing working women and men at the Toronto Transit Commission.

Let's not make this mistake either: It's not about the ATU and its membership. It's not about the membership in those sister and brother unions of workers who work for the TTC. It's not about any given union leader or how he or she combs their hair or how their communications people tell them to speak to the matter in the press and in public.

This is about rolling the clock back in the province of Ontario. It's about this government, McGuinty's Liberal government, and his gang in cabinet jumping on that right-wing bandwagon that's spread across North America where—who becomes the target? Not the Conrad Blacks. And, by God, it did take the Americans to put him in jail; Canada could never get the guts to do it. The target is not the Conrad Blacks, not the Bernie Madoffs, not the stock manipulators and the money traders. It's not the big banks. Good Lord thundering—the big banks have their best friends sitting right here in the executive council. The big banks, every one of them profitable—I know it every time I get nickelled and dimed by one of those thug banks at the teller's cage and every time I see their ever-growing profits, notwithstanding difficult economic times throughout the rest of the economy. These are the big banks. These are the friends of this government, the big banks that got themselves a multi-billion dollar corporate tax cut while working women and men got the HST, skyrocketing electricity prices and now an all-out frontal attack on fundamental rights.

1010

I said this the other day, and I want to say it again. It's necessary that we lead off this discussion, this conversation, by making this point very, very clearly: In any free and democratic society, the most fundamental right is the right of any working woman or man to withhold their labour, and when that right is denied, a fundamental freedom has been put under attack, and nobody here should take any pride at being present during this dark hour and participating in this despicable practice of targeting working women and men.

Good God. Some talentless rock star earns themselves another million or hundred million or billion dollars more a year and they get on the front page of Maclean's and Time magazine, and they're celebrated as some kind of folk hero. When a working woman or man wants a nickel- or 10-cent-an-hour wage increase, they're vilified as being greedy and slothful and lazy. What horse feathers. What a perversion.

And it can't be said often enough, least of all during this debate, that if it weren't for the existence of trade unions and the trade union movement or unionized workers here in the province of Ontario, across this country and throughout North America, by God, there wouldn't have been, ever in our history, a working middle class. There wouldn't have been a need for the blossoming of universities and colleges during that great period of democratization of post-secondary education in the late 1960s, a period I remember well. Because the modest affluence acquired by unionized working women and men was what enabled their kids to go to college and university. The modest affluence won and earned by unionized working women and men is what made it possible for that working middle class to pay far more than their fair share of taxes, but that meant building those schools and colleges and universities—yes, and hospitals and health care, amongst those other public things that make all our lives safer and healthier.

I'm sure we'll have occasion to revisit it in the course of the next hour, and as I wind up for the purpose of this morning, let me present to you another very obvious theme in this whole debate. One regrets the refusal of this government to acknowledge that not only is it rolling back the clock when it comes to the rights of workers in this province, working women and men, rolling back the hard-won victories of working people over the course of decades and generations here in the province of Ontario and across this country, across North America, but it's also encouraging, nurturing, a labour relations era that is bound to have more conflict, more discord, more strife and far less productivity.

Back to the submissions made before Mr. Justice Rand back in 1967-68 when he was conducting the Rand commission: Mr. Justice Rand had been to Australia, and he had witnessed the Australians' fascination with compulsory arbitration as a dispute resolution means. Let me tell you, that was long before dispute resolution as a science had even been titled that, had even had its label, had even earned its slot in academia and in practice, in the real world as well as in the world of research and academia.

But Australians were telling Rand, Australian scholars were telling Rand, one of them being Kingsley Laffer, senior lecturer in economics at the University of Sydney: "In important sections of the industry arbitration seems to be retarding rather than assisting the development of good industrial relations—"arbitration retarding rather than assisting the development of good industrial relations.

The observation made by the Ontario Federation of Labour in their submission to Rand during his conduct of that commission pointed out that arbitration—listen to this, please—"Arbitration is no substitute for free collective bargaining. Where both sides know that arbitration is the terminal destination of bargaining, then the vitality and calibre of collective bargaining is greatly weakened."

It doesn't take a rocket scientist, in the year 2011, to know that a dispute that is negotiated to resolution by the parties collaboratively generates a resolution that is

healthier, more robust and has a far greater likelihood of voluntary compliance by both parties, in contrast to imposed third-party resolutions.

I'll carry on with this when I next have the floor, which I suspect will be Monday afternoon coming.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** It being past 10:15 of the clock, this House is recessed until 10:30 a.m., at which time we will have question period.

*The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'd like to introduce two Rwandan youth ambassadors, their chaperone and staff from World Vision. Welcome to Rachel Uwamahoro, Ivan Gatete and Nadine Mujawamariya. They are here on a month-long educational tour of Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I would like to introduce Michelle Fernandes and her husband, who are here to watch the proceedings today. They're from Beaches–East York.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today, seated in the Speaker's gallery, Scott Reid, the member of Parliament for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, the McGuinty government's policies continue to make an expensive mess out of our hydro system, and you don't respect the fact that Ontario families have to pay the bills at the end of the day. Minister, before the last election, you announced a moratorium on industrial wind farms as an election ploy. After the election, you brought in the Green Energy Act, which effectively stripped away the ability of local communities to have a say over projects in their hometowns. Why won't the McGuinty Liberals respect Ontario families and give them a say over whether they want projects in their communities or not?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The Leader of the Opposition has lots of opinions about the efforts we've made over the last seven years to turn around an ugly energy legacy—his dirty, unreliable, outdated energy system—into a clean, reliable, modern system that Ontario families can count on. He's once again sitting on the sidelines chirping as he remains afraid to talk about his own energy plans. Why doesn't he talk about his plan for energy? Maybe it's because he doesn't support our clean energy benefit that is taking 10% off of families' bills beginning in January. How would he explain that to Ontario fam-

ilies? Maybe it's because he'd have to explain why he continues to oppose our efforts to get out of coal and build a healthier future for our kids and grandkids.

I say to the Leader of the Opposition: Bring out your plan. Let workers and Ontario families know—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I do hope that the minister's rather sophomoric answers will come to an end and he'll address the essence of my question. Minister, as you know, almost a year ago the Ontario PC caucus called for a moratorium on your expensive wind and solar projects in communities where they're not welcome. We said to restore local decision-making to democratically elected councils, and we said to make sure rates were affordable to Ontario families who have to pay the bills. You voted against it, and today you're announcing that you're shoving more projects down the throats of communities who don't want them. Will you do the right thing, Minister? Will you restore local decision-making and will you support the Ontario PC Party call for a moratorium on these projects?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I was delighted this morning to announce that we're moving forward with 40 new large-scale renewable energy projects that are contributing \$3 billion in private sector investment into our economy, 7,000 direct and indirect jobs being created. I think what those workers want to know, what Ontario families deserve to know, is: Are you going to kill those 7,000 jobs too? Are you going to try to undo all the work we have been doing with Ontario families to build a clean, modern, reliable energy system?

The Leader of the Opposition refuses to come forward with his plans. It's because he wants to kill those 7,000 jobs that we announced this morning. He wants to kill the 13,000 jobs we created last year. He wants to kill the billions of dollars of private sector investment that we've brought into our clean energy economy. Come clean with Ontario families—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members will please come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, please come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Minister of Finance. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, you just don't get it. Municipal councils can have their say about the location of a Tim Hortons. They can have their say about the location of a 7-Eleven. But when it comes to your expensive industrial wind farms that could be several football fields in length, you believe that Premier McGuinty knows best; you believe that Minister Duguid knows best. We believe that local, democratically elected municipal councils know what's best for their communities. Minister, not only that, but you have signed very expensive energy schemes that are driving up rates: 80 cents per kilowatt

hour when the price of power in the marketplace is a nickel.

Minister, you know your projects have gone badly off the rails. Will you do the right thing and clear out the moratorium until you fix up your expensive energy mess? Do the right thing.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thousands of Ontario families are participating in our clean energy programs. Thousands are benefiting from our feed-in tariff wind and solar programs. But this is what the member for Simcoe–Grey had to say early on in February. This is what he said: “We’re not going to sign any more of these FIT contracts.... Those days will be gone.” Then this is what he mused: He mused about ripping up these contracts and he said, “Whoever gets a contract now, enjoy it while you have it.”

This is the kind of disrespect the PCs have for farmers, this is the kind of arrogance that party has for Ontario families, and I know Ontario families and farmers are going to reject that arrogance. I know Ontario families and farmers want to build a cleaner, modern, reliable energy system and see right through that Leader of the Opposition.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, I think people see right through you and your expensive energy mess you've created in the province. Come on. You have declared a moratorium so you can save your own seat in Scarborough when it comes to offshore projects. People know what this is all about. You made a decision to save your own skin and you said to other communities across the province, “You're on your own.”

Minister, you did a moratorium on offshore. You seem to care about the health of the fish and the birds and the creatures of deep blue sea. What about people living in communities across the province? Make it the same. Call a halt and fix your expensive energy mess.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I can understand why the Leader of the Opposition is afraid. He's absolutely afraid to share his energy plans with Ontario families, because how are you going to explain to Ontario families why you don't support our efforts, with our clean energy benefit, to take 10% off their bills? How are you going to explain to Ontario farmers—and I'm assuming you support the comments of the member from Simcoe–Grey—that you're going to rip up their contracts and leave them out to dry? How are you going to explain that to Ontario farmers? While you're at it, what are you going to say to the thousands of workers who are working in our clean energy economy across this province? What are you going to say to them about the fact that you're going to kill their jobs at a time when they need them most?

He laughs, he gives his smug smile, but nothing comes out because he's afraid to talk to those workers. He's afraid to tell Ontario families what he's all about. I'll leave it there.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

1040

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** The people of Ontario don't agree with you guys.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Sarnia—Lambton would be best in his seat.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Infrastructure, please come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Finance and the Minister of Community Safety.

I'd just remind the honourable member from Oxford as far as using any sort of props. The same holds true for the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Is the knife in Norm's back a prop?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Finance.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, Minister, this is what I say to the people of Ontario: The McGuinty government has made an expensive mess out of our hydro system, rates are going through the roof and it's time for change in the province of Ontario.

Do you know what, Minister? Your Premier and you had the gall to say to the people in Smithville, to say to the people in Elgin, to say to the people in Middlesex, to say to the people in eastern Ontario that if they opposed the projects, they were NIMBYs. You had the gall to say they couldn't stand up for what they believed in and that the Premier knew best. Well, there's a new phrase for you, Minister; it's called NIMSIAR: not if my seat is at risk. That's why you made your decision on offshore energy plans.

Why don't you have it the same throughout the province? Get this program right. Make sure rates are affordable and that they're in communities where they're welcomed and wanted. Won't you do the right thing?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** If the PC Party actually cared about helping Ontario families with their cost of living, they would not have voted against reducing electricity bills by 10% through our clean energy benefit, and they would not, frankly, have voted against our tax cuts for 93% of Ontarians. They're all show.

If the PC Party actually cared about building a bright future for Ontario families, they would not have plans to kill thousands of clean energy jobs that Ontario families are counting on. If the PC Party actually cared about strengthening and modernizing our electricity system, they would not be opposing every investment we've made to clean up the mess that they've left behind.

Ontario families deserve to know. Where is your energy plan? Why are you afraid to tell Ontario families

what you really think and what you're going to do? Why are you afraid to tell Ontario families who—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, if I've said it once, I've said it 100,000 times. This is how you should proceed: Make sure projects that you sign are affordable to the seniors, to the families, to the small businesses who have to pay the bills. And make sure any of these projects are in communities where they're welcome, because the industrial wind farms you're forcing on communities across the province are driving up rates and have over-ridden local municipal decision-making.

We would restore the right of local municipalities to have their say on these projects, and we would make sure that projects signed are affordable to families—a competitive, transparent process so they get the best technology at the best price for the ratepayer.

Minister, instead of being a NIMSIAR, instead of trying to save your own behind, will you do the right thing and put your moratorium province-wide for all citizens of the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** John Lennon said it right: The Leader of the Opposition is the nowhere man of Ontario politics and, day after day, he confirms this status. He sits on the sidelines and chirps at our efforts to reverse his legacy of an energy system left in shambles, but he hides from Ontario families when they ask him what his alternative is.

The nowhere man is nowhere on getting off of coal and building a cleaner, healthier future for our kids and grandkids. He's nowhere on what he's going to do with the thousands of clean energy jobs that we're creating. The nowhere man is nowhere when it comes to whether he supports our clean energy benefit.

There's no question this Leader of the Opposition is the nowhere man of Ontario politics, and Ontario families can and will see right through him.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Families might be able to trim and cut a lot from their household budgets, but everyone needs to keep their lights on and their home heated. Why won't the McGuinty Liberals exempt home heating from the HST?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We've created the Ontario clean energy benefit. We've created a range of tax credits for individuals and families. We've cut the first rate of income tax—now the lowest in Canada—for working Ontario families.

Our plan is the right plan for the future of this province. We have lowered taxes for 93% of Ontarians. Unlike the leader of the third party, who offers no plan, offers no ideas—one day she wants to remove the HST and the next day she wants to keep it.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** Will it stay or will it go?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Will it stay or will it go? We don't know what they stand for. What we stand for is

more jobs, a better economy and a better future for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** According to a government document obtained through the freedom-of-information request, the governing Liberals considered an HST rebate for home heating. They actually considered it. Government bureaucrats in fact prepared a detailed memo explaining how it would work and exactly how much it would cost. My question is a simple one: Why did the McGuinty Liberals reject that much-needed relief for families?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Because we gave more. We did. We did the Ontario clean energy benefit. We exceeded what she called upon us to do. She called upon us to remove the provincial portion of the HST. We said that's not enough. We said we are going to help people directly through the Ontario clean energy benefit; not only take the HST off but give them a rebate on the tax portion of their bill as we transition through this new tax system that will create jobs and that will serve all Ontarians. That's why the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives said that this policy is neutral on family incomes. That's why other experts have pointed to the fact that Ontarians of more modest means will see overall tax cuts.

This province has strong leadership in Premier McGuinty, taking the tough decisions to build a better economy and more jobs for Ontario's future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It takes a truly out-of-touch government to think that people are fooled with a temporary tax cut on a permanent tax. It's pretty clear that the government made a choice. They could have given families that desperately needed permanent break—some extra help. Instead, they invested in massive corporate tax giveaways. How can the Premier and the finance minister justify finding billions of dollars for some of Ontario's largest corporations while rejecting help for families struggling with their bills?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Eleven billion in tax cuts for citizens; \$4 billion for corporations. It's the right policy.

Last night, I had the privilege of joining my colleague—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Durham. Member from Hamilton East.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Last night, I had the privilege of joining my colleague from Peterborough with 7,600 Peterborough citizens on a telephone town hall, and we heard from them on a variety of issues. They understood, as we took questions, the importance of creating jobs. They said that their top priority is job creation.

This plan will create jobs. This plan—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

Question period, as we all know, is an important time for all members, both in the government and in the opposi-

tion, to deliver their message, but it's also an important time for the people of Ontario and our guests who are here to be able to hear both the question and the answer. When the Speaker has difficulty hearing those questions and answers, I'm sure our guests are experiencing some difficulty, and I would just ask all members to be respectful.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That party offers no solution. That party offers no ideas. They want to go back to the old days when we didn't have a competitive tax system, when we didn't have the lowest income taxes for people of more modest means. We're building a better future with more jobs for all Ontarians, from Thunder Bay to Windsor to Ottawa, right across the vast breadth of this great province.

1050

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is for the Acting Premier as well. This is how out of touch this government is: They've poured billions of dollars into tax giveaways for corporations—who frankly don't need it—and six-figure pay hikes for hospital CEOs, but families, families struggling with their budgets are told they have to pay more. To add insult to injury, when families win some relief finally in court, they're left to foot the bill for high-priced lawyers.

The Acting Premier was at the cabinet table for all of these decisions. Can he explain these misguided priorities to the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Maybe the leader of the third party will explain to the people of Ontario, particularly the north, why she voted against the northern Ontario energy benefit, which provides up to \$200 per family in the north and \$130 per single person. Then she might want to explain to the people of Hamilton and Windsor and all those people whose names she brings in here why she voted against the Ontario energy and property tax credit, which provides over \$1,000 for seniors and \$900 for non-seniors.

You're trying to have it both ways. You have voted against the largest tax cut in history for the poor, the seniors, working Ontarians, yet you say that you want us to do more. You ought to put your money where your mouth is and you ought to vote in favour of those initiatives that help those of modest means, those in the north, those who need our help the most. Stop voting against progressive change for a better future.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** New Democrats actually proudly voted against the budget that brought the HST to the people of Ontario, thank you very much.

I'll now actually bring another one of those people from Ontario's stories into this Legislature, even though the government doesn't like to hear it. Laurie Oliari from

Dorchester writes: "We never thought that we would be worrying about our heating bills as we are trying to save up enough money for retirement."

Can the Acting Premier tell Ms. Oliari why her money can't go towards her retirement, but instead is being used to pay for everything from high-priced lawyers who fought a losing case over late billing practices to a multi-billion dollar break to corporations who don't need it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd be happy if she'd send the information over so I could call that individual. I'd be happy to talk to her.

What that individual may want to ask the leader of the third party is why she voted against lowering income taxes for the poorest of Ontarians; for those with under \$37,000 of income. Why did she vote against every property tax credit we've offered?

She stood up and she proudly said in this House that they voted against the HST. That's fair enough. So, to the leader of the third party: Is it your intention to repeal it? Are you going to repeal the HST, or will it stay?

I come back to the same question. You're trying to have it both ways—no leadership, no vision for a better future.

**Interjection:** Will it stay or will it go?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Will it stay or will it go? We want to build a better future with more jobs for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Alice Cupa from Tecumseh writes: "My 88-year-old mother still lives in her house alone and wants to keep it that way for as long as she can. However, it is becoming increasingly harder for her with everything going up."

Will the Acting Premier tell Ms. Cupa why her mother can't get a break on her home-heating bills, but corporations that don't need it get a multi-billion dollar tax break?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I would ask her to submit the phone number for that woman. I'll undertake to call her, because the leader of the third party just—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I need a parliamentary, acceptable phrase. The leader of the third party misspoke. In fact, we did cut her taxes—the property tax credit for seniors, \$1,025—and you and your party shamelessly, for cheap, partisan political gain, voted against her. You voted against seniors in northern Ontario. You voted against seniors in Hamilton. You voted against seniors in Toronto. But most of all, the NDP have voted against a brighter economic future, against more jobs, against a better future for our children, and now they won't even tell Ontarians what they'll do.

I look forward to the election. I look forward to job creation. I look forward to a better education system, and I look forward to a third party—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just remind a number of members—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** New question.

## HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for Minister of Transportation. The Ontario PC caucus understands that when Ontario families spend too much time in traffic gridlock, they lose valuable time with their children and loved ones. It's why our leader says that an Ontario PC government will make a priority of completing Highway 407 to 35/115 in one phase. The McGuinty government, however, says it will not respect the original commitment to complete the highway on time and in one phase. This latest backtrack makes no sense to the economy, the environment or families looking to get back some time with their loved ones.

Why isn't Premier McGuinty and his government showing respect for Ontario families by completing the 407 eastward extension on time in one phase?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** If the party opposite had not sold the 407 off in a fire sale, we could have built the 35/115 and back again by now.

Here's the reality: We are going ahead despite the economic downturn, the depth of which no one could have predicted. We are going ahead; we are building the 407 to the 35/115. We are doing it in stages. We are in conversation with the mayors of Durham to make sure that the traffic flow goes in the way that is best for the community. But we are building that highway because we know the jobs are important, we know that the congestion needs to be dealt with and we know that the people east of Toronto need that highway built. We're going ahead.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I know that the minister has met with the mayor of Oshawa, His Worship John Henry, who I'm pleased to say is present here with us today. She has also met with members of council and Durham residents, and she knows that everyone is unanimously opposed to Premier McGuinty's backtrack to stop Highway 407 prematurely at Simcoe Street and Columbus. What she should also respect is that Mayor Henry has the support of municipalities across Ontario, not just Durham region—from Peterborough, from Vaughan and from St. Catharines, among other areas, that are also against this backtrack on the 407.

This afternoon my resolution will be debated calling on the McGuinty government to extend the 407 eastward as originally contemplated in one phase to 35/115. Minister, why not show respect for Ontario families here and now and complete the 407 eastward to 35/115 in one phase as originally contemplated?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think the deep respect that we're showing for Ontario families is that we're going ahead with this project, that we're investing billions of dollars in building this highway that is critical. I

welcome Mayor Henry and all of the folks from Durham to the Legislature. As the member opposite mentioned, I have had conversations with them, and we're in ongoing conversations with them—MTO with the region about the traffic flow.

Our deep respect for Ontarians is this: We understand how important infrastructure is to this province. We understand how important it is that the economic development that flows from an infrastructure project like this be in place. That's why we're going ahead. Projects like this need to be built in phases. The first part of the 407 was built in phases. We will build to 35/115. We will do it in phases. We will create thousands of jobs by building that project; invest billions of dollars in the region; we'll make sure the traffic flows.

I look forward to the ongoing conversation with the members of Durham region.

### DISCLOSURE OF TOXINS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, you learned last week, as we did, in the *Toronto Star* and subsequently in other media reports, that the use of Agent Orange within the Ministry of Natural Resources has caused great concern in northern Ontario when it comes to the health effect.

1100

I have here an email from former MTO supervisors who are saying that your ministry, up to the 1980s, used Agent Orange along the side of the highways across this province to try to control the growth of grass and other shrubs. Has anybody in your ministry briefed you about that? Are you aware that your ministry is alleged to have used Agent Orange up to 1980?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Acting Premier will want to follow up with the supplementary, because I know that the Minister of Natural Resources has spoken to this issue in the House.

I have just been made aware that there are questions being asked about practices within the Ministry of Transportation. Obviously, the Ministry of Transportation always would have worked within the existing rules. I will certainly be briefed on the details of that.

In the meantime, I know that you can understand that the Minister of Natural Resources is extremely concerned about this issue and is looking into all of the implications and ramifications, and I will do the same.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, if I understand correctly, what you tell me now is that you are aware that it was used. My question to you is, why have you not come forward? Why does it take the opposition to say what has happened within the Ministry of Transportation?

The issue here is, it would appear at this point that not only the Ministry of Natural Resources but the Ministry of Transportation, and who knows who else, had been using Agent Orange up till 1980.

My question to you is, at what point did you find out, and why did you not make that information public?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I was told this morning before I came into question period that there were questions being asked about the practices of the Ministry of Transportation. I have said to the member opposite that, having found out this morning, I will be briefed as quickly as possible on this issue.

This is obviously a very important and potentially scary issue for people in the province, and we're taking it very seriously. I will take it very seriously in my ministry, and I think it behooves the opposition to be clear that this is something that we all need to look into. We are on it, the Ministry of Natural Resources is looking into it, and we'll do our utmost to make the information available as soon as we have it.

### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Labour.

Although Ontario is one of the safest places in the world to work, it is still too often that we hear of a worker who gets injured on the job or, even worse, loses their life. When our friends and family leave for work in the morning, we want to feel assured in knowing that they are safe at work and will come home at the end of the day.

This House has been following the progress of the health and safety review panel led by Tony Dean. Last December, when Mr. Dean delivered his recommendations, it was named the largest overhaul of Ontario's health and safety system.

Minister, a lot of recommendations were put forth by the health and safety review panel, but just recently I heard you announce the implementation of an interim prevention council. Can you please tell the House more about the role the interim prevention council will have in making Ontario a safe place to work?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** It is with great pleasure that I respond to the question.

I congratulate Tony Dean and the members of the health and safety review panel for their consensus report and recommendations.

Our recent announcement of the prevention council is the first step of many to follow. The interim prevention council's role is to get things under way before our chief prevention officer is named, and I'm pleased to tell the House that they had their first meeting just yesterday.

We're pleased that Paavo Kivisto, former deputy minister of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Labour, is leading the prevention council. I've met with him and know that he and his team share our eagerness and dedication to further improving health and safety in this province.

I look forward to working with the council to ensure that all Ontario workers arrive home safely at the end of each workday.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I certainly look forward to hearing updates from the prevention organization as their

work gets under way. However, there are 46 other recommendations that Mr. Dean and his panel delivered, leading me to believe there is still a lot of work to be done on health and safety in Ontario.

Minister, in addition to the appointment of the prevention council, can you tell the House about some of the changes we can expect to see in the near future that will make Ontario a safer place to work?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The panel identified priority recommendations that the prevention organization will focus on. To name a few priorities: (1) creating a health and safety display that explains the key rights and responsibilities of the workplace parties, including how to contact a Ministry of Labour inspector, and it will be mandatory to post this in the workplace; (2) creating mandatory health and safety awareness training for all workers and supervisors with front-line workers; (3) the development of mandatory entry-level training for construction workers is another priority, starting with consultations with stakeholders to determine those sectors that should be subject to a mandatory training for workers.

I look forward to working with the interim prevention council and the chief prevention officer and implementing the recommendations from the panel.

## HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the Minister of Transportation: I'd like to follow up on the question that the member for Whitby–Oshawa put to the minister. Specifically, that question was: Why did the McGuinty government break its agreement with the federal government to complete Highway 407 by 2013? That was a very specific agreement.

I've heard the minister say that there was an unexpected economic downturn. Here is the point: It was precisely because of that unexpected downturn in the economy that funds were flowing from the federal government and the province for infrastructure programs. That is an infrastructure program if I ever saw one. My question is, why did the ministry not prioritize that highway, for which there was an agreement in writing?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I just want to give a bit of an update on the Flow projects, which are the projects that both the member for Whitby–Oshawa and the member for Newmarket–Aurora are talking about.

The Highway 404 extension into York region, which is a Flow project, is going ahead. I know that was one of the ones that, of course, the member for Newmarket–Aurora would be very interested in. The 407 east extension, as I've already said, is going ahead. We are in the process of beginning the two stages. We are extending to 35/115, but we're doing it in stages.

So the Flow projects are going ahead. To talk about some kind of breach of an arrangement, I think, is absolutely flawed. I think the reality is that we're going ahead with the projects and the ones that are in York region, I think, the member for Newmarket–Aurora is aware of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** We are well aware of what that agreement says. That agreement specifically stated that the 407 east would be completed by 2013. That's the issue we're raising here.

The minister continues to say, "We're going ahead with the program." That's not the point. The program is and should be to complete that highway by 2013. We're asking the minister a simple question: Why has the ministry broken its agreement? It's not a question of a downturn of the economy; it's a question of the downturn of the credibility of this government. That's what's at stake here.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think there was a statement at one point about events happening. The member opposite referred to the economic downturn, which I have noted many times. The reason that we are not able to go ahead as quickly as we would like—and we would like the 407 extension to be built by now. As I mentioned, had it not been sold off, it might have been built by now. Who was it that sold it off? It was the party opposite that gave it away, and we are picking up the pieces of that sale.

We're moving ahead with the extension of the 407 while we're working on all of the other Flow projects that were agreed to with the federal government. The fact is that it is a very, very strong indication of our support for the eastern region that we build that 407 despite the economic downturn.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. At the same time the McGuinty government imposed an unfair tax on home heating and other daily essentials, it shovelled more than \$2 billion to wealthy corporations, taking billions of dollars out of the pockets of those who will spend it on necessities and giving it to profitable corporations sitting on record piles of cash. That's simply bad economics. What does this government have to say to Ontarians who say corporate tax cuts at the present time are just plain wrong?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The pulp and paper industry and forestry industry in Ontario, which are hardly flush right now, have overwhelmingly supported this plan and have indicated that it will create jobs. The automotive sector, which has gone through one of its most difficult periods, supports the policy. It is about jobs. It's about a brighter future. It's about a more efficient and fair tax system. It is about a better future.

Jack Layton has now backed off at the federal level on this. Apparently, he's going to continue to support—I read that with great interest—the Harper Conservatives on this policy. Mr. Layton understands, I think, how important job creation is right now.

I think most Ontarians agree with us and reject the empty rhetoric that's designed to close plants, kill jobs and not help northern Ontario and southwestern Ontario

particularly, which have suffered so much in the last few years.

1110

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Well, he certainly knows his talking points.

Today in the finance committee, the NDP moved a motion calling for the rollback of the McGuinty corporate tax cuts and the implementation of employer incentives that would encourage real investment and create real jobs. This motion was defeated by the government members of the committee. What does this government have to say to people who want jobs, not corporate bonuses?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I reject the tired, empty rhetoric of a party mired in the past. It is about a more efficient tax system for individuals and for corporations. It's about attracting new investment. We simply could no longer afford to be one of the highest tax jurisdictions in Canada. We were already seeing capital move from Ontario to Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

What the NDP want to do is create jobs in Alberta, they want to create jobs in British Columbia, they want to create jobs in Manitoba and simply ignore the harsh realities which we all find ourselves in today.

Our policy is the right policy. It's about jobs. It's about a better future for our kids, and like Jack Layton, we believe that it's the right thing for everyone in Ontario.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** My question is for the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. Minister, International Women's Day is marked in Ontario and across the world every March in celebration of the economic and social achievements of women everywhere. I know the front-line workers in my community, like at Maison Interlude in Hawkesbury, are working hard every day to help women gain access to services so that they can get the help they need to rebuild their lives for themselves and their families.

Minister, can you tell this House what the government is doing to support the work of these organizations?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for his question and for asking it just one day after the Premier and all parties committed to bringing even more women's voices to the Legislature through our collective Equal Voice commitment, because we need women's voices to be here on behalf of all women in Ontario.

Our government knows that to have a prosperous Ontario, we need women to feel safe in their homes, at work and in their communities. We need them to be strong. We need them to achieve economic independence and reach their full potential. That's why we've increased our investments to domestic violence by more than 48%,

why we've changed the Occupational Health and Safety Act, why we've helped more than 6,000 women annually to access social services, why we've accelerated the OCB, why we've invested in child care and why we've trained more than 1,500 women to secure high-paying jobs.

This government has supported and will continue to support women because we know that they have to be their best and we have to ensure that this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Merci, madame la Ministre, pour cette info.

La sécurité des femmes et de leurs enfants est une inquiétude à travers la province. Le gouvernement doit aider ceux et celles qui fuient la violence en permettant aux femmes et aux enfants de retrouver un environnement sain. Est-ce que la ministre peut expliquer ce que le gouvernement McGuinty fait pour améliorer les services pour les femmes et les familles qui font face à la violence? De plus, comment est-ce que notre gouvernement s'assure que ces services sont disponibles en français?

**L'hon. Laurel C. Broten:** À la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, s'il vous plaît.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Le gouvernement de l'Ontario fournit des refuges sûrs et des programmes de soutien pour les femmes et leurs enfants qui fuient la violence à la maison. Nous avons investi dans la construction de deux premiers refuges francophones à Timmins et à Toronto. En mai 2006, nous avons aussi lancé une ligne téléphonique, Fem'aide, pour les femmes francophones en situation de crise. Il y a deux semaines, nous avons annoncé, en partenariat avec Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, du financement supplémentaire pour les fournisseurs de services de première ligne. Notre gouvernement prévoit 141 millions de dollars annuellement pour des programmes qui aident à combattre la violence domestique. C'est une augmentation de 48 % de financement depuis 2003.

The issues women face will only be fully understood when they have a seat in this Legislature and at the cabinet table.

## HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation on the impacts of ending the 407 in Oshawa. The financial impacts of ending the 407 at Simcoe Street are going to represent another substantial tax increase to cover the cost of the end-of-line gridlock. The McGuinty decision will once again make Oshawa families pay more in taxes.

Minister, why didn't you consult with the city of Oshawa on the financial impacts before announcing the 407 would end at Simcoe Street in Oshawa?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I've said previously, I think it is a very important boon to the people of the region of Durham that the 407 is being built, that it's being extended. I think that the message we've heard

most clearly is that people want this road built. They want it to go ahead as quickly as possible. That's why we're building it in stages, and that's why we remain committed to building right through to 35/115. As the member opposite knows full well, we're in conversation with the mayors of the region to make sure that the traffic flow issues are dealt with.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Not only has your government failed to honestly consult with Durham residents but it has also failed to give them basic respect. From making families pay now for the illegal hydro interest charges to breaking your commitment and promise on the 407 extension, your government has a complete lack of respect for families generally.

I think of a couple in my riding whose home was expropriated by MTO for the 407, only to be left high and dry by this government once that family moved out. It's important to know that one of the family members is physically disabled and requires additional renovations to the home, and rather than keeping their word, they didn't help them. Now the government refuses to even speak to the family.

According to your own ministry resources, 255 more property owners are in the same boat. How many more families will be left high and dry through your broken promises and lack of respect for families generally?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I guess I'd like to ask the member opposite how giving away, in a fire sale, the 407 when he was in office showed respect to the families of Ontario, the families of Durham or anywhere else?

The fundamental respect that we're showing to the people of Ontario and to the people of the Durham region is that we understand how important it is to build this road, that we understand how important it is that we make sure that the traffic flow is what it should be, that we make sure that the infrastructure is in place. That's why I've been out to Durham, that's why I've met with the mayors, that's why I've met with the community folks—to make sure they understand that our technical folks at MTO are going to work with them to make sure that the traffic flow works for them.

The economic downturn hit. We had to make a decision. We made a decision out of respect to the people in the Durham region that we would build this highway, and that's what we're doing.

## HERITAGE CONSERVATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Culture. First Nations members of the Algonquin Union are here at the Legislature today, and in fact, Daniel Bernard, Algonquin Firekeeper, is here in the gallery. They're here because the McGuinty government is allowing the clear-cutting of one of the most biodiverse urban forests in Ontario, all for a new subdivision. The South March Highlands outside Ottawa is considered an ancestral site by elders of the Algonquin Nation and has been shown to be of archaeological significance.

My question to the minister is, why will he not stop the destruction of this unique forest?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member for the question. The Minister of Tourism and Culture regulates archaeologists. Under the Ontario Heritage Act, the ministry licenses archaeologists. As well, the ministry reviews the archaeological assessment report.

The assessment in question was completed under the 1993 technical guidelines or standards and guidelines. The assessment report meets the Ministry of Tourism and Culture requirements. The ministry is not an approval authority in respect to any development project. That said, we do recognize the city of Ottawa's effort to force the dialogue between the development proponents and the aboriginal community on this matter.

1120

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm sure the minister knows that the study that he cites as proof that there's no archaeological value to the land has been called "fatally flawed" by the past president of the Canadian Archaeological Association. A report released in January suggests again that the land was very likely occupied by early aboriginal populations and is likely of significant archaeological value.

Will the minister listen to the Algonquin Union, Algonquin chiefs and thousands of citizens and issue an order, as is his responsibility, under the Ontario Heritage Act to halt clear-cutting until a comprehensive study of the archaeological value of this land is conducted?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you very much again for the question.

Our government is committed to building a relationship with the aboriginal people in Ontario. The Ontario government is working with the First Nations and Metis people. We are working to ensure that the artifacts and human remains that may be attributed to aboriginal people are handled with appropriate care and respect.

We recognize the city of Ottawa's effort to force the dialogue between the developer and the aboriginal people. Our government is committed to protecting and promoting heritage. In fact, we are the first government in 30 years to strengthen the Ontario Heritage Act. We strengthened the act to give municipalities the tools they need to protect heritage properties important to our community.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Revenue. Many experts continue to say that our Open Ontario plan will help create jobs and strengthen the economy. As you informed us yesterday, Minister, the highly respected Jack Mintz was presenting to the Economic Club of Canada and did in fact speak very positively about the HST and, just as importantly, our comprehensive tax package.

I wanted to take the minister up on her offer and accept those tickets yesterday but I thought it was more

important to make them available to the opposition members to attend, and I understand that that might not have been done.

Since I didn't get a chance to go, can the minister please update us on exactly what Jack Mintz was talking to us about on the HST?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I'd be happy to update the House on Mr. Mintz's presentation yesterday. Jack Mintz said yesterday exactly what we've been saying all along, and that is that the HST is working, that it makes us stronger, that it makes us more competitive, that it's helping create jobs and that it is creating jobs here in Ontario. In fact, Jack Mintz stated yesterday if we got rid of the HST, two things would happen: One, we would increase taxes on business inputs; two, we would make businesses less competitive.

I know that the opposition parties would have benefited from Mr. Mintz's presentation. I know that the HST is good for Ontario, Jack Mintz knows that the HST is good for Ontario, John Tory knows that the HST is good for Ontario and Jim Flaherty knows that the HST is good for Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I want to follow up with the minister. The official opposition is floating the bait about rolling back the HST by 2%. We do know that this means billions of dollars cut from the tax revenue of the government of Ontario, which provides us with critical services.

The people in my riding do remember the story underneath the bait of an easy answer: a 25% cut in welfare, closed hospitals, fired nurses, chaos in our education system. They're very aware that a rollback to the HST means cuts to services. I'm talking about services like health care and education that we so desperately want and we've already started to fix.

Minister, can you provide us with a clear picture of what a 2% cut in the HST means to the people of my riding in Ontario?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** A 2% cut would be billions of dollars in lost revenue for Ontario.

Let's put it in perspective: A 1% cut in the HST would mean a cut of \$3 billion. The \$3 billion is the equivalent of getting rid of almost 48,000 experienced nurses. What it would be is firing over 38,000 elementary school teachers. In addition, another 1% cut would mean that in my community of Hamilton, there would be no brand new Juravinski Hospital. The other thing, is we wouldn't have the 11 new schools that we have.

Our priority is to make Ontario stronger. We're moving forward; we're going to keep on moving forward.

#### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, is it okay with you that children with special needs are waiting for assessments at the Halton District School Board and in fact are being bumped by assessments for gifted children? Are you okay with that?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to talk about an issue that, as you would know, falls within the Ministry of Education with respect to what the school board is doing. But let me just take a moment to talk about the good cross-government work that we're doing to tackle issues associated with making sure children with special needs across a variety of sectors get those assessments.

The work that we're doing right now is with Dr. Charles Pascal to bring his vision to reality with respect to the Best Start child and family centres. In fact, we'll be hosting 60 people in Toronto today, experts from across the city, exactly to look at issues such as this. How can ministries and cross-ministries ensure that children who come into our entry point, perhaps as a child younger than school age, transition into school age and deal with many of the challenging issues that exist?

I know that the Minister of Education will be looking into this issue, and this is a priority within the Ministry of Education. Cross-government-wide, we continue to find ways to better serve kids and better serve their—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I would have thought that a minister who is responsible for children and youth in our province, a minister who is supposed to be advocating for children and youth in our province, would have been speaking to the Minister of Education and saying, "It's not right."

You know that wait-lists for assessments in Halton can be as long as two years already, yet trustees in Halton have acknowledged that this change is going to push children who have special needs in the classroom to the back of the line again.

Minister, I cannot believe that you haven't taken the time to talk to the Minister of Education to advocate for the children within your ministry. It is shameful, and you should be embarrassed that you're talking about a report that has nothing to do with what's happening in Halton today.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Let me tell you that I am very, very proud of the focus that we have brought on children's issues in this province. It is our government that created the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, which I'm very privileged to lead.

Our record, in contrast to your record—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to focus on the contrasting records for a moment. The Leader of the Opposition called full-day learning a shiny new car. When it comes to investing in our tomorrow, they simply don't get it.

They voted against recent increases to children's treatment centres. That means about 3,600 children and youth with special needs would still be waiting for treatment if you were in office. When your federal government took away billions of dollars from Ontario's families for child care, you sat silent over there. You failed to support

2,200 new child care spaces. You failed to support the first base increases in children's mental health. Investments in autism: You failed to support that. You failed to support the Ontario child benefit. I'll contrast our record to theirs any day.

The issue in Halton is a serious issue. The Minister of Education has spoken to it and she is encouraging the community to speak up, deal with their school boards and call their trustees.

1130

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is for Minister of Health. My constituent Michelle Fernandes has been in agony for six years, following an unsuccessful bone spur surgery on her foot. She now has nerve damage for which curative surgery exists and is funded by OHIP. The problem lies in the fact that no Ontario doctor can perform the nerve resection surgery she needs. She has applied for out-of-country funding to have the operations done in the United States. She has written to this minister and to the Premier, begging for action. She is here in the gallery today. Will the minister please explain why ministerial staff continue to oppose Ms. Fernandes's funding application?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you for the question. It is not a case that I am personally familiar with. I would be more than happy to meet with your constituent following question period to learn more about this particular situation.

We count on our health care professionals to make decisions about appropriate care. These are not political decisions. These are decisions made by our health care professionals. We do fund people to go out of country or out of province if we do not have the expertise here.

I will happily look into this particular case to better understand what the problem is here.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I thank the minister for that commitment. Ms. Fernandes, her husband and I will be outside.

The problem exists here that Ms. Fernandes has been frustrated because ministerial staff continue to deny her access to care by the only doctor in North America who can help. She has been to countless meetings with ministerial staff. She has exhausted all of her personal resources fighting ministry staff's short-sightedness. She has asked, and I asked too—and perhaps you can ask today—if the staff can refer her to an Ontario or Canadian doctor with the expertise, please do so.

In any event, we thank you for agreeing to meet with us afterwards. We will be outside.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Again, I reiterate the offer to meet after question period.

We're really working hard to improve health care in this province. We've been able to bring wait times down substantially. We've got far, far better access to primary care than we had when we took office.

As we continue to improve health care in this province, these particular cases that are unusual are ones that deserve special attention, and I will undertake to meet afterwards.

### TOURISM

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. The President of the United States' proposed 2012 budget includes a plan to impose taxes on Canadian air and marine travellers by charging \$5.50 for every entry into the United States. According to a US Department of Commerce report, in 2009 more than seven million Canadians flew into the US, with the majority of Canadians going for holidays or vacations.

Minister, what is the government doing to encourage Ontarians to plan a "staycation" and attract Canadians from other provinces to visit Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you to the honourable member for the question. Our government has been working very hard to promote tourism in Ontario and support growth in this sector. We understand that tourism brings jobs and creates growth. This is why, since 2003, we have invested \$450 million in the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp. to promote Ontario as a world-class destination and world-class attraction. Our There's No Place Like This campaign has generated over 2.1 million trips and \$376 million in visitor spending between 2007 and 2010.

Our message is clear: Stay in Ontario. Come and explore all that Ontario has to offer. Avoid the US travel fee.

### MEMBER'S CONDUCT

**Mr. Dave Levac:** On a point of order, Speaker: I believe we may have had a breach of the standing orders, and if not, at least the tradition of this place, inside of the chamber. Earlier this morning, envelopes were delivered to each of our desks, including mine, and that's why I'm standing on this point: The pages may have been used for the envelopes to be delivered, which was inappropriate. I understand that it was stopped and that the continuation of the letter was presented. However, what I'm talking about, in terms of the tradition of the place, is that the contents of the envelope contain partisan information and partisan attack that I believe is not the tradition of this place. I would like to see if there could be a ruling as to whether or not it was an appropriate thing to do in this place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Wellington-Halton Hills on the same point of order.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased to address this point of order. It was my constituents who asked me to distribute the postcards. I'm sorry it's upset the member for Brant.

I would now seek unanimous consent to allow members to wear this pin on their lapels.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? I heard a no.

The member from Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I think I understand the tone or the intent behind the point of order, and it was a political shot. Far be it from me to be critical of political shots, but people should be careful what they wish for. If the member rising on the point of order wants the Speaker to forbid the distribution of material in the Legislature, then the Speaker is entitled to do that. That means that members who want to distribute their Stratford calendar, that means that people who want to distribute their Muskoka festival, that means that people who want to distribute any number of regional promotions or promotions around—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I apologize to the member for Welland. I just ask the members—this is an important point that was raised by the member from Brant in response—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Government House leader, I'd like to hear the points of order and the comments that are being made.

The member from Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Not only regional promotional material, but from time to time outright partisan material or self-interest material, like promotion of one's private member's bill. I was here when the member who is being complained of—the member from Wellington–Halton Hills—was himself distributing and then appears to have engaged the assistance of a page to help distribute envelopes that were sealed. I saw the Sergeant-at-Arms respond promptly, and when he appeared to advise the member that pages weren't to be used for that purpose, the member promptly took the material back and continued to distribute it on his own.

I just make this observation: The member from Wellington–Halton Hills is one of the least partisan members—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Be fair. Be fair. The member from Wellington–Halton Hills, in my experience over a couple of decades now, is one of the least partisan members in this chamber. I find it regrettable that, in the pursuit of political shots and gotchas, he becomes the target of this kind of point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please remove the button that the member from Wellington–Halton Hills is wearing. He asked for unanimous consent. It was not granted. Please don't flout the authority of the Chair.

The member from Welland can continue.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I leave it at that. I would ask the Speaker to dismiss this as a frivolous point of order, because we may not enjoy the ruling that you make. I recall the regrettable Marland point of order, which led to us not being able to use props or even displays that were representative of issues in the chamber. I don't challenge that ruling, but I'm confident that colleagues of Ms. Marland, who made the point of order upon which the ruling was based, regret that point of order ever having been made in the first place, because it has to a large

extent handcuffed us in a way that I think Ms. Marland never intended.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The government House leader on the same point of order.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I do believe that what was distributed today violates the standing orders. I find it regrettable that a former Deputy Speaker would flout the rules, as he is well aware of them. It does not respect our democratic rights as members to distribute things that are of such partisan nature. I do understand the member from Welland's point, that we don't want to preclude the distribution of calendars or other such things, but this is incredibly partisan. It was delivered in white envelopes without any return address of who it came from. If we hadn't ourselves seen the member from Wellington–Halton Hills distributing it, I would not have believed it was him either, but clearly he has taken a very partisan stance on this one.

What he has distributed, I would argue, violates section 23(k) of the standing orders on a point of privilege, as it uses abusive and insulting language against members of the government. I believe that he did ask the pages to assist him; they were asked to stop. That did occur. I don't have an issue with that. The rules of the House allow things to happen as they happen and that was stopped.

He did, however, continue to distribute highly partisan, offensive literature in the House on a unanimous basis. It is insulting and I hope that he has not used any of his resources of the Legislature on this, because under the Legislative Assembly Act, subsection 67(10.2), there are restrictions on using our resources in a partisan manner. I would argue that this is incredibly partisan and it doesn't actually indicate that it's from the member in any way, shape or form, and would violate the Legislative Assembly Act as well.

I think this is a serious matter. It is incredibly partisan and I think that we should preclude this kind of activity.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the honourable member from Brant, the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, the member from Welland and the government House leader.

I listened closely to what the member from Welland said and initially I was prepared to make a ruling, but I want to properly give this thought because I am concerned about what took place today. It is serious. I'm also cognizant of how my ruling on this issue may impact on anything in the future. It is something that I do want to give proper thought to and I will defer a decision at this time.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1143 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** As part of heart health month, I would like to introduce the following visitors

from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario who are with us in the Ontario Legislature today. We have Ms. Laura Syron, vice-president, research advocacy and health promotion; Mary Lewis, director, government relations and health partnerships; and Nadia Yee, senior manager, government relations. We welcome you to the Ontario Legislature this afternoon.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Later this afternoon I'll be pleased to welcome David Rempel, a high school teacher at Bowmanville High School, and his grade 10 class, who will be joining us here today around 2 o'clock. I wanted to get it on the record so I can include it in Hansard to send to the school.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** As the House may know, today is the 50th anniversary of stem cell discovery in Canada. We are honoured to have in the House today the daughter and family of the late Dr. Ernest McCulloch: Cecilia MacIntyre in the Speaker's gallery; Dr. McCulloch's grandson, Hugh MacIntyre, who is from my friend Julia Munro's constituency, and I forget her constituency—I know I just broke a rule there, but he's very fond of her; Paul Alexander, Dr. McCulloch's son; and Dr. McCulloch's lifetime colleague and fellow discoverer, Dr. James Till. We're very honoured to have them here in the House today.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I wasn't sure if it was clearly and formally recognized that the mayor of Oshawa, John Henry, was here today making statements on Highway 407. I wanted to recognize him and have that on the record in Hansard on his behalf.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** From my riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London, I'd like to welcome the students of Davenport Public School who are visiting Queen's Park this afternoon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Another group from my riding, Martha and Peter Jaworsky, are here at Queen's Park today. I hope they will be able to join us later on. They are just celebrating their freedom in Ontario.

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** I want to welcome the students of Grenoble Public School from my riding of Bramalea—Gore—Malton. They have been here before.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### PROPERTY RIGHTS

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Today, I've tabled a motion here in the Legislature that, if passed, in accordance with a motion in the federal House of Commons, will entrench property rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms under section 7 alongside the rights to life, liberty and security of the person.

Numerous constitutional documents across the world list the right to property as a fundamental right. This dates back to the original liberal principles laid down by John Locke of life, liberty and property. Unfortunately,

our Charter of Rights and Freedoms makes no mention of property rights. This motion will change that.

This will be the first time in our province's history that we will have used the section 43 amending formula and the first time in Canadian history that a provincial and federal representative likely to represent the same riding have come forward to amend the Constitution.

I would like to add that maybe the good member from Peterborough will co-sponsor this, as he mentioned back in September 2007 that he believed we need to have the entrenchment of private property rights in our Constitution.

### JOB CREATION

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I rise in the House today to speak about some of the jobs being created in Ontario's rapidly expanding clean energy sector. Earlier this month, the McGuinty government announced the creation of 40 jobs at Satcon power systems of Canada in the great city of Burlington, my neighbouring community. Satcon is one of more than 20 companies that have announced they're setting up or expanding plants. They're going to manufacture parts for the solar and wind industry, and that's going to create new jobs for Ontario.

Thanks to bold initiatives like the Green Energy Act, Ontario is leading the nation now in job creation. Last month, it was reported that 36,000 new jobs had been created in the province. In total, Ontario has recovered 95% of the jobs that it lost during the global economic downturn. Strong economic leadership of the McGuinty government has delivered real results for real Ontario families like those in Burlington.

The previous PC government, however, left a legacy of neglect, mismanagement and waste in the energy sector. It was addicted to dirty coal, allowing its use to rise 127% during their term.

Today, however, the province has over 700 wind turbines. It's a leader in solar capacity. It has got the world's largest solar farm in Sarnia. Clean power investments will allow the government to shut down all dirty coal in the province by 2014.

Announcements like Satcon in Burlington are just the latest example of the McGuinty government's commitment to clean energy jobs, and point to a really bright future for Ontarians.

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Every day, residents from my riding of Durham face the gridlock that is becoming an epidemic across the GTA. It literally takes families hours to get to and from work and home again each day.

Today, Mayor John Henry and his assistant Mark Sheriff from Oshawa joined Christine Elliott, Jerry Ouellette and me to call on the government to make good on its promise to complete Highway 407 east. Mayor Henry's trip to Queen's Park today is the perfect example of gridlock. His trip was 67 kilometres, but it took him

over two hours to get here because he couldn't go over 50 kilometres per hour.

This government's broken promises and lack of respect for families is costing money, time and, you might say, lives. Some \$329 million in capital road costs, \$90 million a year in upkeep and hours of wasted time in traffic are what Dalton McGuinty is giving to Durham, all of which could be avoided if Premier McGuinty would simply be a man of his word and respect families enough to complete Highway 407 east, as promised, by 2013.

There's no surprise; he's a man who has broken many promises. If this government is really serious about the 407 extension, I call on the Premier and the Minister of Transportation to support the extension in a single-phase promise. But I don't hold my breath. From a man who has broken his word so many times, I expect nothing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### AGNES MACPHAIL PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It was indeed my privilege and honour last night to attend a public speaking contest in honour of Agnes Macphail. As the borough of East York does each and every year, we honour people under the name of Agnes Macphail. We have an Agnes Macphail award, which will be presented on the 24th of March, as we do each and every year, but we also have a public speaking contest. We invite students from grades 7 and 8 in the local public schools to attend and to make speeches in Agnes Macphail's honour.

This year we had eight students who presented speeches. Two were from G.A. Brown, two from Earl Beatty, two from Valley Park school and two from Westwood. All of the speakers were absolutely excellent in what they were able to deliver. They spoke on a broad range of topics—everything from rainforest deforestation to animal testing, cyber bullying, the Canadian seal hunt, gender-specific schools, gay rights and the negative impact of technology. They did so in an absolutely brilliant way. The judges had a very difficult job, but I am pleased to tell you that the judges came to a conclusion and chose Jessica Cholette-Barr of G.A. Brown school as this year's winner. Her topic was animal testing. She gave a very impassioned speech on why that was wrong, and certainly convinced all the people present of her cause.

There were members of Parliament and provincial Parliament present, and I think that we could learn a few lessons from those students on how to better speak in public.

1310

#### KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE 2011

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** It is my pleasure today to rise on behalf of the great hockey-loving people in Navan, Ontario, in support of their bid to become Kraft Hockeyville 2011.

On Sunday, Navan will celebrate 100 years of hockey in their community, and I will be there. Navan has finished first in Canada for the most testimonials submitted online in support of their quest.

The residents of Navan have always worked together through thick and thin, and have a well-established reputation for their community spirit and resilience. In 1953, they rallied together and built their first arena. Unfortunately, eight months later the arena was destroyed by fire. It was immediately rebuilt through community labour and support. In 1982, the arena was condemned. Once again, Navanites rose to the occasion and built what is known today as the Navan Memorial Centre.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Lyne Proulx and Barry Irvine, co-chairs of the Navan for Kraft Hockeyville committee. I invite everyone to visit [navanhockeyville.ca](http://navanhockeyville.ca) and support Navan's quest to be crowned Kraft Hockeyville 2011.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Few things better unite us in Wellington-Halton Hills than our common appreciation for our local hospitals. This is why I have spent so much time in recent months advocating for our hospital projects in Georgetown and Centre Wellington.

One month ago tonight I attended a public meeting in the town of Halton Hills, where the Georgetown hospital's CT scanner and emergency department renovation project was discussed. While there is strong community support for this project, Halton Hills residents want to know why the province has yet to indicate a willingness to make a meaningful contribution to the project. The Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Centre Wellington continues to await the ministry's permission to move forward to the next stage of planning for a new hospital and the provincial planning grant that would go with it.

I want to thank my colleague, the member from Whitby-Oshawa, who serves as our party's critic to the Minister of Health, for visiting our riding on February 14. Her interest in our area's health issues is appreciated and stands in stark contrast to the minister's apparent disinterest, at least to date. More than four months ago, I invited the minister to come to Wellington-Halton Hills, hoping she'd tour our hospitals in Georgetown and Centre Wellington. She hasn't yet done so, but I reiterate the invitation today. I also invite the members for Guelph and Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock to come to Wellington-Halton Hills as part of their rural health consultations.

I extend these invitations in a spirit of non-partisan co-operation, because politics and the traditional voting patterns of communities must never be allowed to impede the progress of hospital projects in those same communities. Let's show that the promise of the future includes better health care and modern facilities for all our residents and that politics will not stand in the way.

## NATIONAL UNITY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Last evening, over 450 people crowded into the lobby of Queen's Park to witness the book presentation of Toronto's Many Faces to 10 recipients who worked energetically for Canadian unity. Most of those in attendance were presidents of ethno-cultural associations and presidents of national ethno-cultural congresses, who congratulated the recipients on receiving my book and thanked them for the work they had done through two referenda.

In Quebec, as you know, the purpose was at that time to withdraw and to separate. Mr. Speaker, both of us know that without Quebec there cannot be a unified Canada. You know that we came within a whisker of a calamity, and that is the breakup of our own country. Once again, as we move closer to a third referendum, it is my opinion that Canada's ethnocultural connection is destined to preserve Canadian unity. And it is true: The ethnocultural communities and their people have become the glue that will hold this country together.

Both in 1980 and in 1993, these groups met right here at Queen's Park; organized, with my help, marches to the city hall; and presented the "no" vote in Quebec and, in the referendum, a number of petitions—over 10,000, in fact—that were given to the "no" side. In fact, they did even more, and I can't discuss it now but I wish them well.

I say to all of us: Let's make sure that when the referendum takes place again, we call all our friends in Quebec to make sure that there is a unified Canada which can only lead to more greatness.

## PROPERTY RIGHTS

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I rise to discuss a resolution brought forward by the opposition that I think illustrates an important contrast between the McGuinty government and the opposition. While the McGuinty government seeks to build consensus amongst its partners and build a better future for all Ontarians, the opposition chooses to practise that old politics of division and typical "wedge" issue problems.

They are a party that had constant labour strife during their term in office. They were the party that picked fights with teachers, which led to constant strikes, with 26 million school days lost and an entire generation that went without after-school activities.

We restored peace and stability in the classroom, and Ontario students are seeing the results. Test scores are higher; dropout rates are lower. Under the previous Conservative government it was the other way around.

The resolution brought forward by the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington is another divisive policy that could be a problem for us. There is a reason property rights are not entrenched in the Constitution. If you were to listen to the constitutional experts instead of listening to the heckling, they were in agreement that there would be unintentional consequences. It

would have a negative consequence on municipal zoning rules, it would have a negative consequence on native land claims, pollution regulations, environmental protection and—an important point that's been brought up this week—there would be a problem with spouses' rights to property on the dissolution of a marriage.

I think the introduction of the bill shows us the difference between the conflicts—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I welcome the chance to rise today and discuss the speech given by Jack Mintz at the Economic Club of Canada yesterday. In his remarks, Mintz proclaimed that the tax reforms undertaken by this government have made Canada and Ontario far more competitive than all other competing jurisdictions. In fact, Canada is the most competitive jurisdiction in the G7.

Mintz went on to say that the provinces that have harmonized their sales tax have had a greater impact on reducing the tax burden on capital when compared to capital tax elimination. Professor Mintz hammered the point home when he told the business crowd that it would be a mistake if British Columbia reversed their decision to harmonize their sales tax and how input taxes would cascade onto one another.

The Leader of the Opposition knows this to be a problem. In fact, he told a group of Tory party members at the Don Valley West PC AGM in March 2009, "The problem with the PST is it cascades, so every step along the way there's tax on tax on tax, which raises the cost of goods and particularly punishes exports. So we understand how [harmonization] can help the economy."

The Leader of the Opposition knows in his heart that what Jack Mintz says is right for the province, and it is unfortunate that he is not willing to admit this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Standing order 63(a) provides that "The Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 60 and 62 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year."

The House, not having received a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates for certain offices on Wednesday, November 24, 2010, as required by the standing orders of this House and by the order of this House dated Tuesday, October 26, 2010, pursuant to standing order 63(b) the estimates before the committee

of the Office of the Assembly, the Office of the Auditor General, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, and Ombudsman of Ontario are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 61(b), the estimates 2010-11 for these offices, not having been selected for consideration, are deemed to be received and concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

## REQUEST TO INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I beg to inform the House that today I have laid upon the table a request by the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Mr. Johnson, to the Integrity Commissioner for an opinion pursuant to section 30(1) of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, on whether the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, Mr. Hillier, has contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### ONTARIO BARBER ASSOCIATION ACT, 2011

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr44, An Act respecting The Ontario Barber Association.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

### EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (RENEWAL AND MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES), 2011

### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION (RÉFECTION ET ENTRETIEN DES INSTALLATIONS SCOLAIRES)

Mr. Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to amend the Education Act to allow boards to determine, levy and collect rates for the renewal and maintenance of school facilities / Projet de loi 154, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation pour permettre aux conseils de fixer, de prélever et de percevoir des impôts en vue de la réfection et de l'entretien des installations scolaires.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. David Caplan:** This bill repeals division F of part IX of the Education Act in order to allow school boards to determine rates and collect subscriptions under division C of part IX of the act.

The bill amends subsections 257.16(1) and (2) to restrict the purposes for which boards can determine rates and collect subscriptions to that of renewal and maintenance of school facilities.

The bill also adds five new subsections to section 257.16 of the act. Subsection 257.16(3) explains the meaning of "renewal and maintenance of school facilities." Subsection 257.16(4) requires that, before a board raises any money, the board shall submit a financial plan to the ministry in accordance with the regulations. Subsection 257.16(5) imposes a limit on the rates the boards may determine. Subsection 257.16(6) requires that any monies raised for the renewal and maintenance of school facilities be placed into a separate account of the board. Subsection 257.16(7) requires a board that raises money under division C to submit a report to the minister specifying how the money gets used and to post a copy of the report on the board's website.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### MEDICAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

### RECHERCHE MÉDICALE ET INNOVATION

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I rise today to mark the 50th anniversary of the discovery of stem cells by two Ontario scientists: Dr. Ernest McCulloch and Dr. James Till. Dr. Till is in the gallery with us today. Together they laid the groundwork for bone marrow transplants that has resulted in the saving of countless lives.

Stem cells are powerful tools in repairing tissue and fighting illness. Stem cell research offers hope for the discovery of revolutionary therapies for diseases from leukemia to Parkinson's disease. For 20 years, these doctors refined and expanded their knowledge base, along with another Toronto scientist, Dr. Lou Siminovich, and inspired other great Ontario researchers like Dr. Tak Mak, the man who charted the genetics of immunology. There is an unbroken line between their work and the work of researchers like Dr. Mick Bhatia and his team at McMaster University. Last fall, Dr. Bhatia announced that his team was able to make human blood from adult skin cells.

The Ministry of Research and Innovation is proud to support the research through programs such as the Ontario research fund and the Early Researcher Award, and we are proud, as Ontarians, that our province is a

world leader in stem cell research—we have been, ever since McCulloch and Till made their discovery 50 years ago and changed the face of modern cell biology.

Sadly, today we also mark the passing of Dr. Ernest McCulloch. “Bun,” as he was known to his family and friends, was a great communicator as well as a brilliant scientist. Perhaps one of Dr. McCulloch’s more endearing qualities was his prohibition on slide shows at weekly seminars he hosted. He wanted to hear what visiting scientists were thinking, not look at data and charts. He wanted a good old-fashioned “chalk talk,” as he called it.

Dr. Till was impressed by Dr. McCulloch’s way of thinking from the get-go. While Bun was literally jumping up and down after a particularly interesting result, Till was famous for standing by, lean and tall and very reserved. One thing they shared, though, was their devotion to the work and to each other. “When we disagreed, we knew that the right answer was something else,” Dr. Till would say.

En 1969, avec M. Till, M. Ernest McCulloch a remporté le prix Gairdner, une des plus hautes distinctions scientifiques. En 1988, ils sont devenus officiers de l’Ordre du Canada, et en 2004 ils ont été intronisés au Temple de la renommée médicale canadienne.

Notre plus grand regret est que M. Till et M. McCulloch, quoique méritants au possible, n’aient pas reçu le prix Nobel.

Nous sommes honorés que M. Till soit ici aujourd’hui.

Great as these achievements are, what gave Dr. McCulloch the most joy was his family. His wife, Ona—to woo her, he recited verses from Tennyson’s *Ulysses*. The marriage was, according to their eldest son, Jim, “a storybook.” As he put it, “He loved her like crazy.” As for his five children, Bun read to them out loud the entire *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and they used to call him “the voice.”

On the 50th anniversary of this landmark, great Canadian discovery of adult stem cells and on behalf of our government and, I believe, all members of the Legislature, we salute Dr. McCulloch and—I want to thank his partner particularly; a great medical leader—Dr. Till. They are two men who epitomize the spirit and profound impact that research and innovation can have on the lives of Ontarians and indeed, their life-saving benefits for people around the world.

I would ask that all my colleagues here join in the appreciation for Dr. McCulloch’s family and Dr. Till. Thank you.

## HEART MONTH

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** February is heart health month.

I rise in the House today to remind Ontarians that nine out of 10 Canadians have at least one risk factor for heart disease and stroke, two of the three leading causes of death in Canada.

On February 1 of this year, the Heart and Stroke Foundation released its annual report on the health of

Canadians. The report, entitled *Denial Is Putting Canadians at High Risk of Cutting Their Lives Short*, raises alarm bells.

Our government has educated and funded initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of healthy eating, active living and not smoking. However, and to paraphrase the Heart and Stroke Foundation’s report, Ontarians, like many Canadians, know what they need to do to live longer and healthier lives, but they don’t. There is a significant disconnect between what we think and what we actually do. The harsh reality is that approximately half of Canadians do not meet the physical activity and healthy eating recommendations made in that report. The direct impact is that obesity levels have soared to dangerously high levels, among other increased risks. Our government recognizes this challenge and takes it seriously.

I commend the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario for its research and advice on cardiovascular disease, and I am pleased to count them among our many community-based partners on several strategies targeting priority and at-risk populations.

Smoking is a key risk factor for heart disease, and that is why we are building on the success of programs such as the STOP program, which has helped more than 68,000 smokers quit; the Canadian Cancer Society’s Driven to Quit Challenge; and other key Smoke-Free Ontario initiatives. In fact, just last month during National Non-Smoking Week, our government announced, in partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, support to help an additional 20,000 smokers quit. Beginning in spring 2011, participating family health teams will provide access to over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapy such as nicotine patches and gum, combined with counselling, at no cost to the smoker.

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Additionally, because unhealthy eating and physical inactivity are key risk factors for heart disease, our government supports initiatives to prevent obesity and heart disease, including: the healthy communities fund, a province-wide investment program for local groups to promote physical activity and healthy eating; and Ontario’s after-school program, a program for more than 18,000 children and youth at 300 locations in priority communities, including 11 First Nation communities.

Our government’s healthy living website, [ontario.ca/healthy](http://ontario.ca/healthy), provides a wealth of expert advice for families who want to eat healthier or become more physically active.

Our northern fruit and vegetable program is providing fruit and vegetables twice weekly to 18,000 students in northern Ontario schools.

The community aboriginal recreation activator program, designed to support recreation and physical activity, is currently running in 15 remote First Nation communities.

However, government cannot do it alone. Everyone has a part to play in improving health, whether it is

getting physically active or increasing activity levels; making healthy eating choices for families; or preventing people from starting to smoke or helping them to quit through cessation programs.

As part of consistent lifestyle changes, small steps can make a big difference in improving health.

We need all hands on board. This is the key to a healthier Ontario. Ontarians, our health is our wealth. It is the most important asset that we have. We have a combined responsibility in addressing this important issue. In this heart health month, it is important to celebrate our hearts. But, more important, we must make lifestyle changes to impact our heart health, for one simple, profound reason: Our lives depend on a healthy heart. A heart is indeed a heart for life.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

### MEDICAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I am pleased to join with the Minister of Research and Innovation today in congratulating and paying tribute to two great giants in science, two great researchers whom I was well aware of during my time as Minister of Energy, Science and Technology: Dr. Ernest McCulloch and his partner, Dr. James Till, who is here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

These two men, as the minister said, epitomized the spirit and the immense impact that research and innovation can have on the length and quality of all of our lives. All Ontarians—indeed, people the world over—owe Drs. McCulloch and Till an incredible debt. Their work changed the course of cancer research and paved the way for regenerative medicine, the use of stem cells for bone marrow transplants, and many other types of disease research.

While we mourn the passing of Dr. McCulloch, his legacy will endure in the scientific and medical breakthroughs his work has enabled and in the generations of scientists and researchers he has inspired.

I join with the minister and all members in congratulating these two gentlemen. Thank you for your life's work in improving our lives.

### HEART MONTH

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am pleased to rise today to recognize the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Heart Month, which takes place every February to promote awareness and funds for heart and stroke research.

I commend the Heart and Stroke Foundation for the invaluable advice and research that they provide. Unfortunately, there is still much more to be done, especially by government. According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation's 2011 report, nine out of 10 Canadians have at least one risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

In Ontario, we are simply not responding adequately to the reality of this situation. The reality is that nearly one quarter of Canadian adults are obese. Half of

Canadians do not meet the physical activity and healthy eating guidelines. As a result, they are more vulnerable to obesity and to chronic cardiovascular conditions.

Unfortunately, these trends extend to young Canadians. In Ontario, 28% of children aged two to 17 are overweight or obese. I find that a startling statistic. Young people face higher risks of heart disease and high blood pressure.

Prevention plays an important role in decreasing the risk of heart disease. Individuals and their families can take steps towards preventing cardiovascular conditions by having a healthy diet, reducing stress, staying smoke-free, being physically active, and monitoring and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol levels. People need to take responsibility for their own health, but the onus also falls on families, communities, industry, health organizations and government to do their part to protect individuals from heart disease.

One great initiative is the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Spark Together for Healthy Kids program, which helps to respond to the growing epidemic of childhood obesity. This program catalyzes change by sparking grassroots advocacy for healthy living. Spark grants are awarded to local community groups across Ontario. These grants are used to assist groups in planning and carrying out advocacy efforts that support increased access to physical activity and healthy food for children. Grants may also be used to finance projects that engage communities in direct action to implement change in healthy living policy and practice.

An example of this in my own riding has been the Supportive Environment in Schools project. With the help of Spark funding, the Durham region health department worked with the Durham District School Board to mobilize parent councils to advocate for policies that contribute to a healthy school physical activity environment for students.

The foundation is more than doing its part. As members of the Legislature, we now need to do our part to do whatever we can to promote healthy living and reduce cardiovascular disease.

### HEART MONTH

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm glad to add my voice to that of the Heart and Stroke Foundation and to bring attention to healthy heart month, February being heart health month.

Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death throughout the world. However, 80% of premature deaths from heart disease and stroke can be avoided if we tackle the four main risk factors. Think about it: 80% of heart disease and stroke could be avoided. Those are large numbers, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation gives us the key: We have to tackle the use of tobacco, healthy diet, healthy weight and physical activity—four health promotion ideas that would change forever the face of heart disease and stroke in Ontario by decreasing it by 80%. It would also have a huge effect on many other chronic diseases including cancer etc.

Premature deaths due to these risks could decrease drastically with a comprehensive health promotion agenda. As elected representatives, we have the responsibility to do everything in our power to assist people to make healthy decisions. We have to bring forward policies that will make the healthy decision the easy decision. It makes sense in terms of lessening personal tragedy, and it makes sense in terms of saving precious health care dollars. We should do everything in our power to minimize lives suddenly being cut short, with tremendous hardship on families, friends and loved ones. It is the right thing to do.

In Ontario today, we are doing very little about an ever-growing obesity epidemic. Lots of people talk about the next generation having shorter life expectancies than their parents because of childhood obesity. We know that this is coming. We know the devastating impact it will have on individuals, families and communities in our province, yet we do very little. We need the Minister of Health Promotion to take concrete steps to make healthy living the easy choice, something that has been lacking. I'm certainly looking forward to more action.

One very small step would be for the minister to adopt my Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating bill. Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating wouldn't cost the government a single penny. What it would do is it would force big restaurants, mainly chains, to post the calories in the food that they serve, either on their menu or on their menu board. It is the law across the United States. Most of those big chains have already changed their menus in the States, and it would also be quite easy to do in Ontario. It would be an opportunity to give people a chance to make healthier food choices. The calorie information is already there, but the way that it is available to us—on the way to the bathroom, on a brochure that nobody seems to know where to get, on the back of the menu or even on the Internet—one person out of 1,000 uses that information to make healthy choices. When you have it right there in front of you on the menu board, it is one person out of two who will use that information to make healthy choices.

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We could take a small step toward the obesity crisis, given the number of youth who love that food. It would make a huge difference. Yet we have a Minister of Health Promotion who sits on the sideline. What an opportunity lost.

#### MEDICAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mr. Michael Prue:** In response to the Minister of Research and Innovation, in the very short time I have, I would like to commend Messieurs McCulloch and Till for the work they did some 50 years ago and to commend their family for sharing them with us and all of the time that I'm sure they spent in research, in providing opportunities for people around the world to be cured where there were no cures before.

I just want to remind governments—and I know there are increasingly fewer of them around the world—that are reluctant to embrace this technology: that it really does work and that we all need to be able, as Ontarians, as proud Canadians, to stand forth and to say to people that this is a made-in-Canada, a made-in-Ontario technology that needs worldwide participation. One day, that breakthrough 50 years ago will lead to the cure of so many diseases.

#### PETITIONS

##### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature. It's headlined, "Say No to Highway 407 Terminating at Simcoe Street."

"The province's plan to terminate phase-one construction of Highway 407 at Simcoe Street, Oshawa, is a mistake. It is a plan that does not make economic sense, will create end-of-line gridlock, will be detrimental to our rural community and have a significant negative effect on commuters, businesses, tourism, public transit, the historic hamlet of Columbus and all citizens of Durham region."

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend the Highway 407 extension eastward and not terminate it at Simcoe Street."

I'm pleased to present this to the Legislature and give it to page Holly Rose.

##### OPTOMETRISTS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I want to thank Dr. John Peacock, who's an optometrist in Alliston, for sending me this petition and, in fact, for drafting the petition. I put him on warning that I'll be in for an eye appointment shortly.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the slow movement of legislative Bill 171 enacting optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents (TPAs) to treat patients with certain eye conditions. This bill has yet to be enacted now three years later. There has been no timeline for approval of the designated drug regulation set to date;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Please improve my access to my eye care and make our health care system in Ontario more efficient by allowing my optometrist to prescribe TPAs as written currently by Bill 171. Make approval of the regulation package a top priority."

Again, I want to thank Dr. John Peacock.

##### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I have a petition. It's to the Ontario Legislature.

"The province's plan to terminate phase-one construction of Highway 407 at Simcoe Street, Oshawa, is a mistake. It is a plan that does not make economic sense, will create end-of-line gridlock, will be detrimental to our rural community and have a significant negative effect on commuters, businesses, tourism, public transit, the historic hamlet of Columbus and all citizens of Durham region.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend the Highway 407 extension eastward and not terminate it at Simcoe Street."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Oliver.

### HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I am pleased to present a petition to support extending the Ombudsman of Ontario's jurisdiction to include the Tarion Warranty Corp.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas homeowners have purchased a newly built home in good faith and often soon find they are victims of construction defects, often including Ontario building code violations, such as faulty heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, leaking roofs, cracked foundations etc.;

"Whereas often when homeowners seek restitution and repairs from the builder and the Tarion Warranty Corp., they encounter an unwieldy bureaucratic system that often fails to compensate them for the high cost of repairing these construction defects, while the builder often escapes with impunity;

"Whereas the Tarion Warranty Corp. is supposed to be an important part of the consumer protection system in Ontario related to newly built homes;

"Whereas the government to date has ignored calls to make its Tarion agency truly accountable to consumers;

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, support MPP Cheri DiNovo's private member's bill, which calls for the Ombudsman to be given oversight of Tarion and the power to deal with unresolved complaints;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to provide that the Ombudsman's powers under the Ombudsman Act in respect of any governmental organization apply to the corporation established under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, and to provide for necessary modifications in the application of the Ombudsman Act."

I could not agree more, of course. I will sign it and send it with page Nicolas to the table.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I will sign it and send it to the table via page Maria Van Bommel.

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I have thousands of petitions to present to the Ontario Legislature, which read as follows:

"The province's plan to terminate phase-one construction of Highway 407 at Simcoe Street, Oshawa, is a mistake. It is a plan that does not make economic sense, will create end-of-line gridlock, will be detrimental to our rural community and have a significant negative effect on commuters, businesses, tourism, public transit, the historic hamlet of Columbus and all citizens of Durham region.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend the Highway 407 extension eastward and not terminate it at Simcoe Street."

I certainly agree with this petition. I will sign it and send it to the table with page Tyler.

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** This is a petition to the Ontario Legislature.

"The province's plan to terminate phase-one construction of Highway 407 at Simcoe Street, Oshawa, is a mistake. It is a plan that does not make economic sense, will create end-of-line gridlock, will be detrimental to our rural community and have a significant negative effect on commuters, businesses, tourism, public transit, the historic hamlet of Columbus and all citizens of Durham region.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend the Highway 407 extension eastward and not terminate it at Simcoe Street."

I'm very pleased to sign this petition and give it to page Erik.

### HERITAGE CONSERVATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I want to thank Barry Burton from Creemore for sending me this petition regarding the

replacement of the Collingwood Street bridge, which is located in Creemore.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Collingwood Street bridge, built in 1913, located in the township of Clearview in the county of Simcoe" in Creemore, "is scheduled for destruction and replacement;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To have the bridge declared to have significant historical value under the Heritage Act, protecting it from destruction; and

"To have the bridge restored while maintaining the existing structure."

Again, I want to thank Barry Burton, and I will sign this petition.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have a petition today from Donna Stanley who lives in Strathroy, Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

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"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I agree with this petition and sign it and give it to page Simon.

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I have close to almost 5,000 names on this petition, which reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the residents and businesses of southern Ontario, oppose any decision to terminate Highway 407 east in Oshawa or Clarington and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proceed with the Highway 407 East extension project as planned and promised, in one continuous phase from Brock Road in Pickering through to Highway 35/115, with a completion date of 2013."

I affix my name in full support.

### RURAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I want to thank Mrs. Maureen Millar for sending me this petition regarding Duntroon Central Public School.

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the frameworks of rural schools are different from urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep swimming pools open in Toronto schools but hasn't found any money to keep rural schools open in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I rise today to read a petition. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in serving Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I put my signature to it and give it to page Beau, who is here with me today.

## DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** “Whereas the McGuinty government is conducting a review of the province’s underserved area program (UAP) that will result in numerous communities across rural and small-town Ontario losing financial incentives to recruit and retain much-needed physicians; and

“Whereas financial incentives to attract and keep physicians are essential to providing quality front-line health care services, particularly in communities in rural ridings, such as Simcoe–Grey; and

“Whereas people across Ontario have been forced to pay Dalton McGuinty’s now-forgotten health tax since 2004, expecting health care services to be improved rather than cut; and

“Whereas taxpayers deserve good value for their hard-earned money that goes into health care, unlike the wasteful and abusive spending under the McGuinty Liberals’ watch at eHealth Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the McGuinty government immediately stop its ill-advised attack on rural health care and on rural communities who need financial incentives to successfully recruit and retain doctors.”

I agree with the petition and I will sign it.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS’  
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES  
AMENDMENT ACT  
(DAMAGE DEPOSITS), 2011**

**LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR  
LA LOCATION À USAGE D’HABITATION  
(DÉPÔTS POUR DOMMAGES)**

Mrs. Savoline moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 145, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 145, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d’habitation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I am happy to rise in the House today to speak to my private member’s bill. It is the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Damage Deposits), 2011.

This bill aims to help protect to the quality of rental housing in Ontario. This bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, by giving landlords the option of collecting a damage deposit of no more than 25% of one month’s rent from tenants. Currently, landlords are solely responsible for any repair costs incurred, as they are not permitted to require a damage deposit. My reason for

bringing this bill forward is to protect tenants, protect the landlords and particularly small business landlords, as these are the individuals who are most affected.

I said “protect tenants” because if units are not available, Ontarians who need to rent do not have available units. I said “particularly small business landlords” because these individuals are most affected by the repair costs, and if they can no longer keep up with these costs, they may get cut out of the business altogether, which, again, would affect tenants who rely on these units to house them.

The purpose of a damage deposit is to partially—partially—assist landlords in compensating for the cost of repair or replacement of property when wilfully or negligently damaged by a tenant and/or a specified person. Aside from helping landlords with damage costs, damage deposits, I believe, will provide an incentive to tenants to exercise care in their rental units and also help ensure housing units are in good condition for future renters.

Ontario is lagging behind. We’re lagging behind many other jurisdictions when it comes to allowing for the collection of damage deposits. Currently in Ontario, legislation allows for a landlord to collect a rent deposit of up to one month’s rent, but it cannot be used to cover repair costs. This is more commonly referred to as “last month’s rent.” Landlords collect the last month’s rent at the beginning of the tenancy, and it may only be used and applied to the last month’s rent, not to cover any damage or security costs.

British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba and the Maritime provinces have some form of damage deposit. These jurisdictions require a damage deposit at a higher cost than the 25% that I’m suggesting. Alberta and Saskatchewan, in fact, allow landlords to ask for the equivalent of one month’s rent for a damage deposit. Newfoundland and Labrador allow for a maximum damage deposit of three quarters of one month’s rent. British Columbia and Manitoba allow for a maximum security deposit of half a month’s rent. And British Columbia goes one step further: They allow landlords to ask for an additional half a month’s rent if a tenant has a pet or brings a pet in after they have established tenancy.

This piece of legislation takes into consideration that a new tenant does have additional costs, such as first and last month’s rent, so the damage deposit amount that I am suggesting can be no greater than 25% of one month’s rent. This 25% of one month’s rent is more than landlords can currently ask for to offset damage costs, so it’s certainly a step forward and puts Ontario to the same standards as most other provinces in an effort to protect our rental stock.

This bill is aimed at helping to protect Ontario’s rental housing stock. However, it also helps to protect all tenants, since the cost of damage repair is spread across all existing units at this time. The landlord and tenant must agree in writing as to the condition of the rental unit on the day the tenancy begins, and the damage deposit cannot be used to compensate for ordinary wear and tear.

I'm proud to say that this bill was welcomed by many stakeholders. The Federation of Rental Housing Providers of Ontario supports the intent of this bill, in addition to the maximum damage deposit amount of 25% of one month's rent, as it's more than they can currently recover in the cost of damages.

**1400**

The Ontario Landlords Association has also spoken out in favour of this bill. In fact, on February 17, the OLA met with three senior members of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing along with the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. At this meeting, the OLA members presented a top 10 list of concerns on behalf of small business landlords. Number two on their list was the request to be able to collect damage deposits. I want to clarify that these individuals advocate for small business landlords, for whom there is usually no way of recovering their losses at the hands of bad tenants.

I have also received emails from many independent individuals acknowledging the positive change that this bill would bring forward. The bill really only becomes a problem to those tenants who create excessive damage to their unit.

Last summer, on July 1, this government introduced their HST, an additional 8% on many services and items. For rental housing providers, this means an additional 8% on services such as hydro, landscaping and snow removal, and there's a long list to follow that. There's a great risk that all these additional costs are leading to small business landlords simply getting out of the business.

For 2011, as you may be aware, the allowable rental increase that landlords can impose on tenants is at an all-time low. It's a mere 0.7%. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that an 8% increase for landlords on various services as a result of the HST alone, with the possibility of a 0.7% increase in rent, makes it impossible for good landlords to continue to maintain their rental stock.

These additional costs of the HST drastically increase costs for landlords, and many have no choice but to dip into their reserve funds in order to make up for the difference in cost. The depletion of reserve funds that are there for emergencies is a very bad idea. Those funds are not to be used for things like ongoing maintenance. This would have serious implications for the rental housing industry.

Landlords do their best to ensure the good condition of their buildings, and we need to ensure that we are helping them as well. We simply cannot afford for them to get out of the rental housing business. These units are critically imperative for Ontarians and for the residents who reside in them.

Although damage deposits do not compensate for the HST, they do offer a means of help—a small means of help—if and when a unit is damaged. Regardless of the cost increases the HST has placed on landlords, the financial responsibility of tenant neglect should be the responsibility of that tenant, not the landlord, and

certainly not the financial burden of the other tenants in the building.

This bill aims to assist in some of the costs of damage for landlords as well as to act as an incentive for tenants who choose to be irresponsible. As I already mentioned, this bill should really only be the cause for concern for those who have a tendency to cause damage to their rental units.

It's really no different than how a hotel or a motel would operate. We know that when you check in at a hotel or motel, your credit card information is taken as a form of deposit for any incidentals. If any damage occurs over your stay, it will be charged to your credit card accordingly. These checks and balances are in place for hotel and motel accommodations, but they are overlooked for our rental housing.

Basically, the only tool that landlords have is that they may enter a premises by providing 24 hours' written notice to the tenant. If there is wilful and excessive damage, there are options for an expedited evictions process reducing the period of eviction from 20 days to 10 days or, in some extreme cases, immediate eviction. This, however, still does not address the costs incurred by the landlord for repair.

I want to go over what happens when a tenant moves out and there is no damage done to their unit. The landlord, of course, is required to repay the damage deposit, including interest, no later than 15 days after tenancy ends. Interest must be paid to the tenant annually on a damage deposit. This is at the same rate as the rent-increase guideline in effect at the time the interest is due.

Should the landlord neglect to pay the damage deposit, the tenant may apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board for an order requiring the landlord to repay any portion of the damage deposit that the landlord was entitled to retain. It is the landlord who has the onus of proving that he or she was entitled to retain the portion of the damage deposit.

I know the world is not perfect and there is never a perfect solution that will be supported by everyone, but anything that takes a step in the right direction to protect our rental stock is certainly important.

I spoke earlier about preserving our rental housing stock, and the enormous importance of rental housing units in Ontario. When a unit is damaged, not only is it not quickly available for the next tenant, but it is a great expense to the landlord as they have to cover the cost of repairs and also lose out on monthly rent. As you know, this is an opportunity for a landlord to raise the rent for the next tenant, particularly in cases where the landlord has incurred a large cost from repairing damages from the previous tenant.

This bill also aims to stop this process. This bill protects the future viability of rental housing stock in Ontario, current tenants and the rental housing providers. It is my hope that every member in the House will see the importance of this bill and that you will support my attempt in protecting Ontario's already vulnerable rental housing stock so that we can ensure it remains in the best

condition possible. I look forward to the comments by other speakers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased to debate Bill 145 and share my time with the member from Scarborough.

Like most things, when you look at a new bill—actually, I want to applaud the member from Burlington as well. Thank you for addressing the issues of housing as part of your discussions with your party. When you do your homework and you discover that back in 1995 Al Leach said, “We’re getting out of the business. Housing’s not part of our platform,” it’s really refreshing to know that there are people like you that care that housing is important, and it is important from both perspectives: those who rent and those who are the providers. I thank you for that, sincerely. It really is refreshing.

One of the challenges with dealing with the bill—and again, I think that a bill such as this has the opportunity to be able to present both sides of an equation—is that you do hear about things such as damages that do occur, but are they anecdotal or are they factual? Some of that is the question of the economics of this: How much actually does occur? Where does it occur? Under what kind of conditions does it occur? In fact, as you do an economic business case—because on the flip side are the people who rent. While I appreciate that 25% may not seem like a great deal of money, if someone is paying \$1,000 a month for rent, \$250 is a lot on top of another month’s rent at the end. How do you balance that out?

We deal with the working poor in addition to the social housing. Most people spend over 50% of their rent already on high-rise, on apartment rents. That’s just part of the real challenge of the cost of rental housing—or housing, for that matter—in this province. When you hear that a house’s average purchase price is some \$440,000, you start to get concerned about the economic impact of additional burdens on the people who are actually either in some cases purchasing or, in this case, renting.

So where is the economic balance in this? And how are you able to provide, to say that if this occurs, these are the reasons, this is the impact? I unfortunately don’t see that in this bill. I think that needs to be addressed and identified, as to who this impacts on the other side.

I also think that we need to be able to look at some of the questions that—we talked a little bit about the damage, but the damage deposit—how do you determine what is normal wear and tear? Who makes that determination? What about the additional cost that this would have on the Landlord and Tenant Board, if in fact they are the people who are going to do the monitoring and assessment of this? While I would like to think that all things are created equal, including folks who are the providers, not every provider may in fact return that deposit cheque. Who assesses and monitors that process, and how do we incorporate that? Those are some of the challenges that I don’t see being addressed.

1410

Yes, I recognize that there is an opportunity for the issue of regulations, but I think those analyses need to be done ahead of time so that we can balance out both the stakeholders that are involved in this, because in this particular bill, you do have both: You have those who are providers and those who are the renters. What is the impact on both of them?

I also would like to make a suggestion around the issue that is related to low income. I spoke about the ability to pay and what impact that has on folks. If you go out to certain parts in this province, there is a high percentage of apartments that are not rented. Would that be less impactful than someplace that’s in downtown Toronto? The availability of transportation makes a difference for folks and where they choose to live and work.

All of those things play into this equation. What I’m suggesting is that there are costs associated if this occurs. There are remedies already within the tenant act to expedite, and you’ve identified that in your comments.

Are there other opportunities to be able to say to the landlords or the providers, “How can we help you with this other problem that you’ve identified?” Well, then, give us more facts in order for us to be able to really have an understanding of how serious that problem is. Is it a universal problem? Is it in one area more than another? How do you analyze, assess and ensure that, in fact, there’s fairness on both sides of it?

I wanted to very quickly address the HST as well. There’s no question that there are additional costs to landlords that are coming with the HST, but remember, there also will be an opportunity for the costs, for example, of utilities to be reflected in the future guidelines for the annual rent increases. Again, we’re trying to balance this out. Yes, there are costs here and, yes, there will be offsets on the other side.

It’s exactly the same process for a landlord or provider who has to increase their rent in order to ultimately decrease their energy costs. When the energy costs go down, the rent must go down. As you put in the new capital improvements, the rent goes up. But there’s that balancing effect.

That’s what I think is most important here: Where is the balancing effect on both sides? Where’s the economic impact analysis? How are we able to proceed with the assessment and the monitoring? Who does this fall under? Is it the Landlord and Tenant Act? Is it municipal affairs and housing, service providers? I don’t know. But these are the sorts of things that we need to have those discussions on, prior to moving forward on this.

I will reiterate: Thank you for taking the initiative, and thank you for ensuring that housing is spoken on that side of the room. Thank you very much.

I now share this with my colleague.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I’m very pleased to speak to Bill 145, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act,

2011, which has been introduced by my hard-working colleague the member for Burlington.

In fact, I want to begin by commending my colleague for the hard work that she has undertaken on many municipal issues. Of course, today we're dealing with one that is of significant importance to the housing industry.

When I take a look at the bill that she has brought forward to this Legislature, it becomes abundantly clear to me, and I'm sure to other members of this House, why this member has had such a very successful political career, both at the regional and provincial levels of political life.

If we take a look at the bill in front of us, we can see that she has a very nuanced appreciation of a very complex issue. This amendment that she has introduced to the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, speaks to her skill at balancing a very complex issue in a very pragmatic way.

This bill involves an excellent compromise for both of the parties involved, namely, the landlords and the tenants. So I do want to congratulate and thank the member for Burlington for introducing this very carefully considered and clearly articulated plan to introduce continuity and stability into Ontario's housing sector, which of course is always very important.

As you know, renting and leasing of apartments, condominiums and houses is a very important sector for our economy in the province of Ontario. Urban areas, such as the GTA and also Kitchener-Waterloo where I live, are particularly affected by fluctuations in the supply and demand of housing, and are also affected by the disagreements that sometimes can arise between landlords and tenants.

Due to the importance of a strong rental and leasing sector, it is certainly in the best interests of the landlords, the tenants and indeed all Ontarians who are looking for housing to have a clearly articulated set of rules governing rental agreements. If we take a look at what the member for Burlington has presented here today, we see that it is very reasonable and a very fair compromise that is indeed in the best interests of both parties: the tenants and the landlords.

It's obvious that the member for Burlington has listened and has consulted with both parties. As a result of that consultation, and based on the experience she's had throughout her political life, she has developed, as I said before, a very thoughtful and very sensible solution to a problem that unfortunately can quickly become quite contentious.

This bill will eliminate many of the divisive issues that can arise between a landlord and a tenant when debating remuneration for property damages. The member has succeeded in finding an appropriate balance that is very satisfying to both parties.

So we have before us a bill that, at the end of the day, is simple and straightforward. Basically, it says the following:

(1) The landlord and tenant must agree in writing as to the condition of the rental unit on the day that the tenancy begins.

(2) The damage deposit cannot be used to compensate ordinary wear and tear.

(3) Interest must be paid annually on a damage deposit at the same rate as the rent increase guideline in effect at the time the interest is due.

(4) A landlord must repay a damage deposit, including interest, no later than 15 days after the tenancy ends when there is no damage.

It's worth noting that this bill will finally formalize a system for damage deposits. This is important because, despite the displeasure of having to pay more up front to cover potential damages, a damage deposit such as what is being suggested here will help to protect tenants and landlords from problems later down the road. Damage deposits provide an incentive to tenants to prevent damage from occurring, and they protect landlords from undue financial consequences.

Furthermore, Ontario is in great need of a formalized process for damage deposits. Other provinces, such as Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, require an upfront damage deposit. However, this legislation today is unique in that it builds upon the experiences of those other jurisdictions. Whereas other provinces require damage deposits equivalent to half a month's rent, this bill takes into consideration the ability of the tenant to pay such a cost.

1420

The member for Burlington has demonstrated that she clearly appreciates the difficulties new tenants experience when moving into a new home or apartment. After providing first and last months' rent, and saddled with additional moving costs and new furniture, oftentimes new tenants cannot afford to provide an additional one half of one month's rent. Bill 145 eliminates these problems by providing relief for new tenants while ensuring coverage for landlords by reducing damage deposits to 25% of one month's rent. This is a reasonable solution.

I would like to add at this point in time that I support this bill. The bill also has the support of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario, and I certainly think the fact that it has been endorsed speaks volumes to the fact that this will, at the end of the day, strengthen the relationship between landlords and tenants.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have to state at the outset that I have considerable sympathy for small landlords. In fact, as an MPP from the Toronto area, we often deal with small landlords who find themselves with problematic tenants, people who damage properties, people who don't pay their rents, and the whole difficulty they have in removing these tenants who often cause great difficulties in single-family homes, in basement apartments, in very small units with two or three apartment units.

I have considerably less sympathy, though, for large landlords. In my entire time as an MPP and as a mayor, I don't think any large landlord has ever come seeking my assistance. They seem to do very well by themselves.

We were disappointed—because I talked to my caucus about supporting this bill, although we had not actually seen it—in terms of, I thought it was for small landlords. I thought it was for the mom-and-pop operation who could find themselves in considerable difficulty.

I'm not sure that large landlords with thousands and thousands of units need this kind of protection. They have lawyers, they have accountants, they have complete access to the Landlord and Tenant Board. In fact, I have never heard of them seeking such a system.

I looked at the bill with some considerable intent, and I wondered about 25% of the last month's deposit as against—and I tried to put that in terms of what that was going to buy. The average two-bedroom apartment in Toronto—and those are probably the most expensive apartments in all of Ontario—is around \$1,000, and so, at maximum, we would be asking for about \$250, but considerably less in other places in Ontario where the rents are not so high. So what does \$250 buy in terms of protection for a landlord, be it a large one or a small one? That is a very small amount of money. I am not sure it's going to protect landlords very much if considerable damage is done. I do know that if you are a homeowner or apartment renter or in a condo and you were to get in a tradesperson, \$250 would be eaten up with a few hours' work, in work and materials, and I am not convinced that the amount is a correct one that is going to stop damage.

What I am worried about is that it is going to cause a great deal of difficulty between landlords and tenants in terms of, the landlord seems to have most of the authority, as he or she does under the act presently, in terms of what they do. A landlord will be able, as an example, to say, "I am deducting \$125 from your \$250 because the wallpaper is torn." I don't think they'd go that far, but it has not been defined here exactly what the work is, what actually is wear and tear.

I had an opportunity to stare at the ceiling as I was listening to a previous speaker, and I see that there's a tear up there. I have no idea who caused that, but a landlord could say you caused that—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** It's the Liberals who did that.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It's the Liberals who did that.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The government might say it's Mike Harris; exactly.

I'm not sure, but a landlord can literally say anything; that a person caused wear and tear.

I also have to wonder about the length of time that's involved. Certainly, if you live in an apartment for a number of years, there's going to be more wear and tear. If you have children, there's going to be more wear and tear. If you have a pet, there's going to be more wear and tear. None of this is sort of—can I get my head around it?

There's nothing in the legislation—and I read it over the last two days—to talk about accidents. What if something happens by accident? It wasn't the intention of the tenant to cause the damage. But accidents do happen: dents in walls from moving furniture, a stove fire—all of those things that happen to ordinary people in ordinary

circumstances. Again, I don't know how that is going to find itself within the body of the bill.

I also have to question the whole thing about the Landlord and Tenant Board. Right at current times, if you ask landlords what their number one difficulty is in this whole process of renting apartments, they will tell you it's dealing with the Landlord and Tenant Board. The backlogs are enormous. The backlogs will take months for action to take place. It is a very frustrating experience for landlords as well as tenants. I wonder: Without additional resources—and I don't see any contained within the bill, nor did I expect to see any—when you're now starting to adjudicate upon deposits as well as first and last month's rent, as well as non-payment, as well as noise, as well as damage, as well as all of the other things that are heard, how is this going to impact a board that is absolutely overwhelmed? Without additional resources, at considerable cost to government, that too may be problematic. Perhaps the member from Burlington can deal with that when she gets an opportunity.

You also have the whole problem, as I see it, of a landlord, when a person is moving out after three or four years, walking around the apartment and saying that a couple of the electric plates over the light switches have been broken, or there's damage to the wallpaper, or there's a wall that now needs to be painted, or whatever. "I'm a good landlord, so I'm only going to charge you \$100, and I'm going to retain that." They have the automatic authority to retain that. The tenant then has to go to court. The tenant then has to go, and all that's up for dispute would be that amount of money. Are they going to go to court for it? Are they going to take all that bother? It will be an opportunity for some unscrupulous people to simply take half of the deposit and define the wear and tear in any way they want.

These are all problematic things. I'm not saying that the bill is not a good idea; what I am saying is that it should be more clearly defined. Perhaps the member in her final two minutes can indicate whether she intends to encompass those landlords that look after tens of thousands of units in the same way as a person who has one. If it is, and with all the other things I've outlined, then I think that the bill is not the right one. If it can be remedied, if it can be made to work for landlords and tenants as well, then perhaps I might change my mind. But I leave that to my colleague, and I'm waiting to hear what she has to say on this as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I am pleased to be given an opportunity to speak to Bill 145, an Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, brought here by the member from Burlington. I have to say that I have the utmost respect for my friend from Burlington, who spent a lot of her career in the municipal world, like I have done too.

I am glad to speak to this bill for several reasons. I had the opportunity to serve on the Metro Toronto Housing Authority for many years. I can tell you, from my experience there, the things that happen between land-

lords and tenants. I've also had the opportunity to serve four years on the Social Housing Services Corp., working with the not-for-profit sector landlords and property managers and trying to find remedies for their problems etc.

I have to say that when I first read this bill I had some reluctance in supporting it. The more I delved into it—I certainly have a lot of concerns. But let me state at the outset that, over the years that I've been in public service, I have to say that there are good tenants and bad tenants. There are good landlords and bad landlords. As a government, we are to serve all the people, and we should be looking for a balance when we provide legislation. Any piece of legislation we bring forward should really provide that balance both for landlords and for tenants.

1430

As many of you may remember, I got elected to this Legislature in 2005. I had the opportunity of being in this House when the government actually did the review of the Landlord and Tenant Act, and the Residential Tenancies Act was brought in in 2006 when I was here. I have to say that, from listening to that particular debate, I got a clear indication that the government took a balanced approach, because they had consulted with the stakeholders, both tenants and landlords. There were extensive public hearings, and the act was brought forward. It was well received at that particular time by all in the industry.

I'll just mention some of the changes that were brought about in 2006. Landlords today can negotiate starting rents with new tenants when their unit becomes vacant; that was a major change that allowed landlords to deal with the increasing cost of providing rental units. Rental units that were built after 1991 were exempt from the annual guideline from the government for rent increases.

The interest rate that landlords had to pay on the last month's deposit was a big issue. It was set back then, and the government was being requested by landlords that that should be changed. We responded to that and provided that assistance to landlords, and I believe they were quite pleased that the government did that.

Along with that, the landlords' major concern at the time was they wanted a process that was fast, that was efficient and that could allow them to evict a tenant quickly when there was a problem. I believe that the new Landlord and Tenant Board, through this new piece of legislation, does provide the landlords with that opportunity.

I have to say that when I looked at the bill very carefully, I got concerned. My colleague from Beaches—East York raised the issue about the added costs that the Landlord and Tenant Board would have to, I guess, incur if they were to adjudicate over some new issues.

But let me tell you one thing that I have a real concern about. In the social services sector today, the majority of the clients that are in social housing are on social welfare. We, the government, provide those people with the first and last month's deposit. This would be an increased cost

to provide them with the money for this additional deposit that would be required.

That would mean that this government would have to look for new opportunities for taxation to generate that revenue. I don't believe my colleague on the other side of the House really wants to see this government embark on taxation of the general public to provide this opportunity to protect landlords. I do not believe it's a balanced approach and I do not believe that's what the general taxpayer wants.

What I see here is that we're really punishing good tenants—and the majority are good tenants, because we have a few bad apples. I believe the system today with the Landlord and Tenant Board, and also with the courts, provides the opportunity for landlords to have these types of issues adjudicated well and gives the landlord that proper opportunity to recover any additional costs as a result of damages.

But on top of that, my concern is that the vulnerable in our community would suffer from this particular bill, especially newcomers. Can you imagine being a newcomer in the city of Toronto and being asked for first and last month's rent and also a damage deposit? I would tell you that most people will not be able to afford it.

On top of that, we're trying to attract students to Toronto and to Ontario to go to our universities. Can you imagine a foreign student having to provide first month's rent, last month's rent and a deposit on top of that? We're not making it attractive for them to come to our province.

I don't believe that this is the best approach. There might be some other ways of dealing with this, and I'm happy to listen to other opportunities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's a pleasure to rise today and speak in reply to Bill 145, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act. Before I even start, I'd like to commend the member from Burlington for having the tenacity and the wherewithal to draft and present this bill today to the House. It's an issue that I think is province-wide, especially in some of the larger urban areas. It's certainly a concern.

The role of the landlord is often a thankless and underappreciated task, yet over 30% of the population of Ontario relies on landlords to provide quality housing options. However, all too often these rental property owners are left holding the bag after negligent or careless tenants have abandoned properties without addressing damages and their responsibilities as occupants of these properties. If businesses and residential homeowners are required to place a deposit when they rent a tool or a car or something from a rental agency, why, then, is it not acceptable that landlords would also require a damage deposit when they give renters access to a very significant investment, such as their properties? The fair and the balanced approach of the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act creates an incentive for tenants and landlords alike to monitor the conditions and liveability of these rental units.

The collection of damage deposits will help to protect current and future tenants in single- and multi-unit buildings by benchmarking the condition of these units during the creation of rental agreements. Any costs associated with repairs will be quickly accounted for through the damage deposit or be determined to be the responsibility of the property owner. Landlords will have the ability to efficiently repair any damage and place units back on the market faster by reducing extra expenditures and revenue gaps. Landlords will no longer find it necessary to pass the cost of unit maintenance on to other tenants through rate increases.

In addition, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act will help to modernize Ontario's rental marketplace and create parity with other jurisdictions, such as BC, Saskatchewan and Alberta. This is an important point, as the rental housing market is supported, by and large, by people who are investing in additional properties as a safe and reliable way to create equity for themselves.

Of course, a major consideration to be made before amending the rules surrounding tenancy is how this change will affect the renters themselves. By establishing a limit of 25% of the monthly rent on the amount that the landlords can require as a damage deposit, this bill keeps the cost of damage deposits in Ontario well below the rates that are charged in other provinces.

This bill has the support of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario, the Ontario Landlords' Association and numerous independent landlords across the province.

The intent of this bill is to create protections for property owners that are enjoyed by many other business owners in our province. It is a worthwhile bill that deserves careful consideration from all members of this Legislature before being passed and/or moved forward to committee.

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the bill at this time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you to the member from Burlington for bringing this forward. I'm so sad I'm not going to be able to support it. It's probably going to be her last bill on second reading debate. I really like her, and I wish her all the best in retirement and thank her for her years and years of service to Ontarians, both at the municipal level and at the provincial level. Thank you very much.

I want to situate this bill in what I think is the real problem: We have a housing crisis in this province. That's the simple reality. We have 50% of our tenants paying more than 50% of their incomes on rent already. And 50% of our tenants—not surprisingly, given the first statistic—are saying that because of that, they are not able to afford some of the necessities of life. We're not talking about the frills; we're talking about the necessities, like food, school supplies etc. That's the reality of being a tenant in the province of Ontario.

The Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, not surprisingly, is uniformly—of course—opposed to this bill or anything like it. I know that in Alberta, where they have a similar piece of legislation in place, it's extremely difficult if not impossible to get that security deposit back from landlords. My friend from Beaches–East York has outlined several of the reasons why that might be. In fact, it is that way in Alberta. That's the reality of the lived experience of this bill put into place in Alberta. In fact, it acts as almost a disincentive for good tenants, because if you're not going to get the deposit back anyway, why keep the place pristine?

1440

Again, this is an issue of size as well. For a small landlord—I have been a small landlord and also a tenant. As a small landlord with only a few units that you're renting, how is that small amount of money really going to compensate you for any serious damage?

However, on the other side, if you're a huge landlord, all of a sudden you have a windfall of equity given to you. I think that's unfair; I think that's just grossly unfair. In a sense, we're looking for balance, but in reality, this isn't a balanced situation. The landlord owns the equity, and very often the tenants are paying off their mortgage. That's not a balanced situation, right out of the gate.

I think we have to be very careful when we're going to target the person who's holding less power in that situation. Certainly, when we look at the overall situation in Ontario and how precarious most people's housing is—remember, we have over 140,000 families waiting on the affordable housing lists in Ontario—then we see the real depth of the problem.

I certainly appreciate the comments all around the circle. There were many good insights made. I hear from the majority of members that this is not something we're going to support, which is not to say that our compassion does not go out to the ma-and-pa landlord who's renting out their basement just to meet their own needs and who suffers as well.

Surely there are other ways, really, of looking at that issue. One of the ways we've suggested, for example, is to take the HST off heating. That would help here, and I think that's a much more direct way, perhaps, of helping those who pay their utilities than this way.

Again, I'm not going to support it. It's difficult enough now for tenants even to get their last month's deposit back. As my friend from Beaches–East York said, sometimes they have to go to court just to get what is their legal due. Often, landlords already withhold it for all sorts of reasons, including damages. They shouldn't do it. Tenants don't know their rights. They don't get it, and they don't have the time or the means to get it either, to go through the various steps that are entailed.

But of course, out of our constituency offices, we've also helped landlords, on the other side, who have problem tenants.

Balance here is to say no to this bill. Balance here is to vote instead for the powerless of the province of Ontario, and those are the tenants who need housing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I think there's a point that has been missed here in the focuses on (a) the protection of tenants and (b) the protection of the housing stock—and those are pivotal in this debate. If we play this chicken-and-egg about if we take a \$250 deposit and the landlord is going to keep half of it or all of it, my big fear is that the landlords that need that money to repair severe damage are going to go out of the business altogether and that rental stock is going to deplete.

I think we have to start planning and getting our minds around it. Is this a baby step forward? Yes, it is, but it's the right step forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Burlington has two minutes for her final response.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I do want to thank my colleagues this afternoon from Etobicoke Centre, Kitchener–Waterloo, Beaches–East York, Scarborough–Rouge River, Parkdale–High Park and Sarnia–Lambton.

It's a difficult issue, it's an important issue and it's as complex as it is simple. It has complexities, but I think those complexities can be worked out and will be worked out. But in its simplicity, it's there to protect rental housing stock and tenants here in Ontario.

I've already mentioned that I hope I get support; I can see I'm not going to. But I want to say that—do you know what?—in other provinces, this program is working. It isn't the big, horrible thing that occurs. It becomes a way of life in rental situations.

If the stock is not protected, neither is the tenant. If the stock is protected, the tenant has a clean, safe place to live.

This bill aims at preventing landlords from increasing rent excessively when a new tenant takes occupancy in events where severe damage has been done. As you know, the landlord can raise the rent much higher than would normally be allowed because of those excessive damages that had to be repaired and the irresponsibility of a previous tenant. It's not intended to pay the entire damage deposit. Two hundred and fifty dollars may not go a long way, but it goes much further than zero goes right now.

It's my hope that the bill would help tenants, that it would help landlords but, most of all, that it would protect our rental housing stock across this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time allocated for Ms. Savoline's ballot item has now expired. We'll vote on the matter in about 100 minutes.

#### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government should honour its commitment as set out in the Flow agreement with the federal government, dated March 2, 2007, and “complete the extension of Highway 407 eastward from Brock Road to Highway 35/115 with construction to begin in 2009

and to be completed in 2013, including provisions for a dedicated transit right-of-way.”

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mrs. Elliott moves private member's notice of motion number 65. Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** The eastward extension of Highway 407 has been the subject of discussion both locally and provincially for number a years, but it wasn't until 2007 that matters really came together, or so we thought at the time.

The agreement among all of the parties culminated in what's known as the Flow agreement, which was a federal-provincial agreement signed on March 2, 2007, that obligated both the federal and provincial governments to do several things with respect to provincial transit and infrastructure.

Among other things, the federal government was obliged to assist in the completion and construction of the subway to York University. In return, the provincial government was to complete the 407 extension eastward to Highway 35/115 by 2013.

I should note at the outset that it was crystal clear, as part of the Flow agreement, that this was to be completed in one phase, not two phases. And as events transpired, that theory has been borne out by the way that the provincial government has acted and with respect to the assessments that were undertaken.

On the strength of the Flow agreement, given the sanctity of that contract, land acquisitions proceeded for the eastward extension, and both local municipalities and the region of Durham began to make their economic plans and projections based on the security of the agreement.

Then, suddenly in June 2010, without any warning or consultation, an announcement was made that the 407 would be built in not one phase but in two phases, with the first phase to end at Simcoe Street, which is in the hamlet of Columbus, part of the city of Oshawa and in the northern part of my riding.

No credible reason was given by the government for this decision, which has essentially destroyed the economic plans for the development of the entire region and which will have a significant impact on the economic growth of southern Ontario.

Certainly a lot of excuses were given. We heard quite a few of them. One was—and we heard this from the Minister of Transportation—that it was always intended for the 407 extension to be built in phases. To that I would say, quite the contrary; the Flow agreement is crystal clear that this extension was to be completed, in its entirety, in one phase by 2013.

We heard from the minister that they really wanted to complete the full extension of the 407, but couldn't because of the economic downturn. To that I would say a few things: One is, where I come from, a deal is a deal is a deal. No one signs an agreement in business or in their personal lives that they don't intend to keep, that they don't have the economic resources to fulfill. They keep

that money aside, knowing that they have to fulfill that obligation.

1450

Secondly, despite the economic downturn, the province is continuing to expect that the federal government will live up to their part of the bargain. If the economic downturn is an excuse for the provincial government, then surely it would be for the federal government, but they are fully prepared to fulfill their part of the bargain.

Thirdly, I would say that since the Flow agreement was signed in March 2007, this government has already spent billions of dollars on some of their other pet projects, including the green energy experiment; the eHealth fiasco, which involved millions of dollars of consultants' contracts; and other so-called priorities there. I think it would behoove us all to remember this when we get closer to the election and we hear this government start promising the sun, the moon and the stars in their bid to get re-elected. Remember, they said there was no money for the 407. If that is the case, there shouldn't be any money for anything else either.

I'd also like to spend a little bit of time speaking about the reason behind the decision to stop Highway 407 prematurely at Simcoe Street. The truth of the matter is that no one knows. I would dare say that the minister really doesn't know why the decision was made to stop this highway at Simcoe Street. There was absolutely no consultation, no discussion, no assessment—absolutely nothing. The decision was abruptly announced last June, just like that. It makes absolutely no sense from an economic perspective, an environmental perspective, or a cultural or social perspective, and it's also going to cause traffic chaos.

On November 23, His Worship John Henry, the mayor of Oshawa, who I'm pleased to say is with us for this discussion this afternoon, met with the Minister of Transportation and made a presentation on behalf of the city of Oshawa, the municipality of Clarington, the township of Scugog, the city of Peterborough and the region of Durham, and asked her to honour the province's commitment to build the Highway 407 extension in one phase to Highways 35 and 115.

I would like to briefly quote from the letter that the mayor sent to the Premier, dated December 8, which summarized this discussion:

"During the meeting, we discussed our extreme disappointment that the parameters for completion of the highway had changed without any communication or input from Durham region and its municipalities or the city of Peterborough.

"Minister Wynne heard that building the extension in phases is not viable and simply not fair to the region of Durham and its municipalities or to the city of Peterborough for the following reasons:

- "—a misleading environmental assessment (EA) process;
- "—significant, unnecessary and unbudgeted road infrastructure expenditures for local municipalities;
- "—imbalanced economic growth; and
- "—negative safety, environmental and cultural impacts."

Well, notwithstanding these very cogent arguments, the Minister of Transportation insisted that the project would have to be completed in two phases.

I would just like to expand a bit on the reasons that were given by Mayor Henry to the Premier and to the Minister of Transportation about why it didn't make any sense to stop Highway 407 at Simcoe Street. One, of course, is with respect to the environmental assessment process. Simply, the process associated with the environmental assessment did not adequately deal with phasing or allow public or municipal comment on phasing.

In fact, phasing should have been part of the environmental assessment process but was not. The province did not undertake traffic, noise, financial or other impact studies to determine the full impact of dumping Highway 407 traffic directly onto local and regional road networks. If phasing had originally been contemplated, it would have been included in the environmental assessment, but it simply was not.

On the issue of "significant, unnecessary and unbudgeted road infrastructure expenditures for local municipalities," I would note that the breach of the Flow agreement is going to cost the residents of Durham region and the city of Oshawa approximately \$329 million in unplanned capital roadwork costs plus millions of dollars for ongoing road maintenance. This is not a planned expense. There was no discussion about this; it was simply decreed by the McGuinty government, and taxpayers are expected to pay for it, as they are for all the McGuinty government backtracks—and we've noted a lot of them in recent weeks.

On the issue of "imbalanced economic growth," the future economic growth of not just Durham region but all of southern Ontario depends upon the full eastward expansion of Highway 407 as soon as possible. Again, I would like to quote from Mayor Henry's letter to the Premier, dated December 8, which states the matter quite succinctly:

"As you are aware, the future prosperity of southern Ontario depends on infrastructure.

"Every year, millions of trucks run along the Highway 401 corridor from Montreal to Windsor, directly through the heart of the GTA. It is so congested that it is often called a 'linear warehouse' full of goods destined for millions of consumers worldwide, seven days a week.

"The Toronto Board of Trade estimates that gridlock in the GTA costs the Ontario economy \$6 billion per year in lost production. Also according to the board, GTA residents face the longest commute times worldwide (79 minutes in the GTA compared with 77 minutes and 57 minutes for New York and Los Angeles...).

"As you are aware, between 2005 and 2010, the province conducted an environmental assessment on extending Highway 407 east through Durham region to ... 35/115. The EA documents further support the facts noted above by stating that:

"—International trade and goods movement through Durham region is critical to the greater Toronto area and the greater Golden Horseshoe.

“—Durham region is an eastern gateway for international/national tourist trips.

“—There are existing and anticipated capacity constraints between Durham region and the greater Golden Horseshoe.

“—No alternative exists to Highway 401 for commercial traffic.

“—Congestion on Highway 401 has a large influence on provincial, national and international trade.

“—Current and anticipated congestion levels severely impact existing and future industry, trade, tourism and economic growth.”

It pretty much says it all. We absolutely need this road, and we need it built quickly.

Finally, I would like to note, just on the issue of the safety, environmental and cultural concerns that have not been considered or assessed by the province, that there are an estimated 2,100 cars per hour that are expected to spill off Simcoe Street onto the adjoining secondary roadways. There is prime agricultural land included as part of this mix. It has been farmed for literally hundreds of years, in some cases. None of this has been considered as part of this determination.

Finally, the historic hamlet of Columbus is a vibrant, small community in Ontario. They've undergone some recent roadwork in the area, and they have a proud history and a proud community. They weren't consulted about this, and this is going to have a devastating effect on their community.

Again, none of this was considered. We're supposed to be nurturing and preserving Ontario's heritage and culture. In one fell swoop the McGuinty Liberals are walking away from Columbus without a backwards glance.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that all of us at the local, municipal, regional, provincial and federal levels are united in our resolve. It is absolutely essential that we have the Highway 407 extension completed in its entirety to Highway 35/115 without any further delay. We're going to continue to advocate on behalf of the city of Oshawa, the region of Durham and, indeed, all of southern Ontario to request and actually require the McGuinty government to listen to the concerns of our people and to honour their existing commitment to extend Highway 407 eastward without further delay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** With your permission, Mr. Speaker, because some of the members are going to various other committee meetings, we're going to commence with the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. If the member from Brant is back in time he will do his time, and if not, I will pick up the difference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker; with your permission.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Sorry. The way the rules are, for Thursday afternoons anyway, we have to continue in rotation. You've just used your rotation, but I will be back to the member very quickly, I would think.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** But you can't get up again.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I would only be up once?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Yes. You're up.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** That's it. I find it unusual that another member from another group was able to speak for an ongoing time frame, but I won't speak to that at this point in time.

I think I'll start with: How close are we on the 407 east? I can tell you a number of positive things people may not be familiar with. That is that the request for qualifications, generally known as the RFQ, was submitted and is in the process of being reviewed. That is completely done.

**1500**

The Minister of the Environment has approved the environmental assessment for the entire project through to 35/115, which means that the entire corridor of the 407 is protected at this point in time. There is still a federal environmental assessment that lacks approval, but I'm sure that will come.

The 407 east will meet high environmental standards for construction, community consultation and making a provision for a dedicated transit way and an HOV lane, which of course is a special lane carrying two or more people in a vehicle, something that probably should be on the 400 series of highways everywhere.

We continue working with the region of Durham, Oshawa and other municipalities to understand and assess the impact to the local traffic network of the proposed termination of the 407 east extension. I know that Minister Wynne has been in Oshawa meeting with the various mayors, and I attended that particular meeting. I've attended other meetings with particular mayors. The minister has also met, on at least one occasion—I think perhaps two—with the chair of Durham region, Chair Anderson.

I should speak to the money that has been invested in our area, and it seems to be taken very lightly. I'm a little taken aback. There is almost the impression that nothing has been done.

I can tell you that in seven years—I'll just briefly scan through, but you're going to see very quickly a total of some \$145 million of highway projects in Durham region and another \$66 million worth of projects that are currently under way. I'll just give you a few of them:

—on 401, where most of them are occurring, it was over \$62 million for the widening of 401 from Harwood to Salem, which was completed in 2005. This was a seven-year project, since the inception of this government;

—\$7.2 million invested in the resurfacing from Stevenson to Salem, and that, of course, goes right up to the Oshawa area;

—\$12.3 million invested in the widening of 401 to 10 lanes from Westney to Salem;

—\$8.2 million invested for resurfacing the eastbound lanes from Brock Road in Pickering;

—\$8.3 million invested for resurfacing from Brock Township 2nd Line to join Highway 7/12, and that, of

course, comes down into the Peterborough-Oshawa-Whitby area.

The projects are many. The continuation goes, and that includes \$65.1 million for a new interchange at Stevenson Road in Oshawa, which is a city that's been referenced a lot today—certainly, they have got the lion's share—and of course a paltry \$1.5 million for signage, which will be completed by 2011.

I can tell you that I had the opportunity to spend a day with Infrastructure Minister Chiarelli in my constituency of Ajax-Pickering. I know that just one of the locations we visited was off 401. It was St. Francis de Sales church, which will become an art auditorium.

Everywhere you turn, there were infrastructure dollars, including transportation—if not particularly transportation—of the improvements going on in our area.

I think I should put a few other things in perspective. There are a couple of issues that are not really raised, but I think it's important that you explain the difference between the three governments and what is actually going on.

I know that in the past, Ontario Tories have opposed municipal infrastructure investments. I don't know if you can say a name or not, Mr. Speaker. If I say a name and it's wrong, I'd be pleased to retract it. It's a quotation, so I presume you give the name to justify the quotation. It was Tim Hudak who said that that was "too much." In fact, in Ontario investments—there was enough. They were saving some 3,000 jobs in Durham.

I can tell you that the opposition party opposed Ontario's partnership with the auto sector as the only subnational government that actually came forward to support the corporation, the men, the women, the workers and the pensioners. Once we proceeded with the United States and the government of Canada putting forth \$4.3 billion, it was a case of a restructuring and a very successful corporation in Oshawa that has just blossomed, and they have done a tremendous job. The workers are back working. There were some 300 more people working than there were two and a half years ago when the recession hit. In fact, not only are they working, but because they're working there is no problem in paying the pensions. It just goes on.

The general picture of the economy, where there are 95% of jobs being recovered in Ontario—a general comparison means in the United States of America only 11% are being returned to work. Certainly one of the great areas that we, the Ontario government, have been able to assist is the city of Oshawa, as well as the entire region of Durham.

I should explain one of the delays in the process. There are a lot of people who think you can just go and complete the entire process at once, but it's important to know that the government would still need another two and a half years to complete land acquisition and a multitude of other criteria to begin phase two. It is appropriate to commence phase one as soon as possible—that's our intent—and it's a commitment of time to continue with phase two to 35/115 prior to the ending of phase one or

as phase one comes to an end, so that it's an homogenized time effort to complete the entire structure through the 35/115 as fast as possible.

I understand the phase, the end of the dialogue, just will not stop. We're doing everything under the sun to make that process go as fast as possible, and it's going to happen. There is a firm commitment there from the minister. There's a firm commitment there from the entire government, and we're on the way.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's actually shameful to follow the member from Ajax-Pickering, who should be standing up for Durham. We're supposed to be working together. The shamefulness of it. I'm almost—look, I'm going to stick to what—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The work that Christine Elliott has done is remarkable, and it's not finished. When we become government, with the privilege of the people of Ontario, I can assure you we'll have one of the strongest, most effective people at the cabinet table. This is just one more example of paying attention to her constituents, listening and arguing their cases—a duly-trained lawyer. We're so pleased today to have the mayor of the city of Oshawa working as hard, co-operatively, working I believe with Premier McGuinty, if that's what it takes, even though often you can't trust his word.

I think it's time for Durham to be listened to, so what I'm going to do for the limited time I have—rather than argue on points like the member from Ajax-Pickering about who is speaking, how much time and all that, let's talk about 407 for Durham. That's what we are here for today. Don't waste the time twitting about some meaningless commentary on—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The former minister knows what I'm saying. Look, I was expecting you would be standing up in contradiction to the broken promise by the Premier. That's what he should be doing. There is a time to stand up and there's a time to shut up, and he hasn't learned either one.

Anyway, this report—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm trying to get the member from Northumberland to listen up here.

September 28, 2010, recommendations from the regional Durham planning, Mr. Georgieff and Cliff Curtis and the commissioner of finance: This is a considered report on the implications. I'm going to just list in the brief time, because the member from Oshawa is so passionate about this that if I don't give him his fair share of time he'll be just—he'll be exaggerated in his expressions.

1510

Number one: "That the province honour its commitment to deliver the entire Highway 407 east undertaking by providing a definitive schedule for the next procurement process to complete the Highway 407 extension

from Simcoe Street to Highway 35/115, including the east Durham link, such that the time for the entire undertaking is within five years of phase one completion;

"That the province work with the region, area municipalities and other stakeholders through the implementation and design process for the phase one construction to assess traffic"—I'm going to interrupt here a bit.

There was a report issued—I don't have it with me today—prior to the decision, I believe, in June. That report gave advice to the minister. The advice was on not completing it and/or completing parts of it—the east link was dropped. That report, paid for by the government, was to legitimize their decision not to complete it. How cynical; without even having the courtesy and respect to talk to the mayor of Oshawa, the regional chair. It saddens me that the government acts so magnanimous, like everything should have a rose attached to it, and yet behind closed doors they're scheming and designing to do the very opposite.

It's almost like when the now-Premier was running in 2003. He was leaning up against a lamppost, and he said, "I won't raise your taxes, but I won't lower them either." The very first thing he did was raise them. It's that cynicism—and the forgiveness, that the media overlooks this. This is one more glaring example that affects the people in Columbus, in Oshawa, in Port Perry, in Clarington. It's unbelievable, the lack of respect for people who have, in good faith, participated in the environmental assessment process. They participated openly, the staff, the citizens, the technical people—all to be laughed at, sneered at. Just the arrogance of it all. It saddens me that we have come to this low point.

I thank the member from Whitby–Oshawa for bringing it up respectfully. I'm a bit more jagged, and I know that. But it is frustrating to have to work alongside someone in co-operation and then to be ignored. I know that's how the mayor of Oshawa feels. He's now going to other communities to get the resolutions of council. I commend him for his work, as well as Christine, and Jerry Ouellette. I wish that the minister would listen, and I can only pray that that will happen.

Thank you, and I'm going to share my time with the member from Oshawa.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I'm rising in support of the motion put forward by the member from Whitby–Oshawa. I am rising in support because it seems to me that this is an idea whose time has come.

Now, many New Democrats will not support the building of highways. We prefer rail, we prefer public transit, we prefer a whole bunch of other modes of transportation for moving goods and services around because, by far and away, they're cheaper. We support the movement of large things by water whenever possible, through the Great Lakes and shipping across to the United States. It can be done much cheaper on a per-cost basis if you do it by water or by rail.

But there is a time, when it comes, when it is absolutely essential to look at highways. We all know, those of us who live in the greater Toronto area, that gridlock is probably one of the single greatest phenomena hurting us, as a commuting public but also as a trading public. Getting goods and services across boundaries and across borders and from one municipality to another, you need a good system. If you don't have the rail, if you don't have the other infrastructure, if you're relying on trucks, primarily, to move those, you have to have a highway system that works. We are losing—and it is estimated; I'm not the estimator, but I have read it many times—about \$6 billion of productivity per year in moving goods and services around the GTA because of congestion.

Now, along comes the idea of building the 407. I think the 407 being built was a pretty good idea in its day. I think it was—

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** You guys built it.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Yes. It was a good idea, and everybody universally agrees it was a good idea. What was a bad idea was selling it. That was a pretty bad idea, letting someone else make the profits; selling it for \$3 billion. It's estimated today to be worth more than \$10 billion, so that was not a very good sale. And it wasn't a very good idea to foist the fees upon ordinary people who are forced to use that because they need to move themselves and their goods and services faster than the 401 will allow.

I would hope that when it is built—and to the proponent who is bringing the motion forward, please don't sell that portion if you ever find yourself in government. Don't sell it again. If I'm to stand here and say that, yes, I think it should be built, it's on the premise that it will be in public hands, it will be for the benefit of people, we will have a regulation as to how much the fees are going to be, and that if there are any profits accruing, they accrue back to the people of Ontario who built it, who put up the money and who went through all of the political difficulties and the construction difficulties to have it done.

Having said that, we are concerned that the government is now attempting to phase this in. We want to know the cost to the region of the phase-in. We have seen some numbers that have been presented by the municipalities, by the region of Durham, and this is going to cost hundreds of millions of dollars more to phase it in than to build it all in one go. If it is going to cost a lot more of taxpayers' money, please take the cheaper route—which is why I am supporting this. I think it's going to save a lot of money if we build it all at once, and the building of the 407, although it was in three phases, is testament to that. It was planned, it was built in very short order, and it was done at a reasonable cost using public dollars.

I'm also very concerned about the Simcoe exit. Whenever you build a short length of highway and you have an exit where it terminates, a lot of cars terminate there because they have nowhere else to go. Drive down

the Allen expressway in Toronto and find out, when it stops all of a sudden at Eglinton Avenue, how many cars are waiting to get off at Eglinton Avenue—or they have to get off at Lawrence. How many try to get off a little bit earlier? You have hundreds or perhaps thousands of cars in a lineup to get off, and the gridlock, the spewing of pollution, and all the other things that happen. I don't want that to happen on Simcoe Street in Oshawa, and I am sure that the good people of Oshawa don't want that to happen either. So, please, if you're building it in one phase, make sure the phase is beyond that. Make sure the phase where you're putting people off is not in the middle of the downtown core of a vibrant city, because that is not the appropriate thing to do.

I also want to ask the government, if you're not supporting this, to think about the cost to the municipality to fix that exit road or the exit roads that are contained within the first phase. They're going to have to fix them all up, spend a lot of money so that they can handle, as I've heard, up to 2,100 cars an hour, and then when the final phase is built and the cars don't come off there, they'll be left with throwaway infrastructure which serves very little purpose. There are not going to be 2,100 cars per hour getting off at Simcoe Street. It's not going to happen, and yet they're going to have to spend money they don't have to build an infrastructure which is literally throwaway. Don't do that either.

Every day somebody stands in this House and says we are in a recession—every day the opposition says it; every day the government says it—and that we need to create jobs. I have to ask this government, what is wrong with creating the jobs that are necessary to build this all at once? Why is it necessary to phase it?

I heard my colleague talk about how they haven't bought all the properties yet. Well, perhaps, but you can start building it. It's like the railway a hundred and whatever years ago. They built it and they kept going and going and going until it was gone and done. They started at two ends. There was only one thing to join. Luckily, they joined right there in the Kootenay Pass. You can build a highway the same way.

1520

You can build it in three or four or five sections and have it all come together. I swear it won't even be out half an inch. The engineers are that good—or should I say a centimetre, Mr. Speaker? I think I should say centimetre, because the pages wouldn't understand what half an inch is, and rightly so.

I think we also have to think about, if we don't do it all at once, the pollution that is going to come down on the people of Oshawa when all the cars are sitting there idling. All the pollution—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Well, no, you're sitting there and you can't get off. You've got an exit, but you can't get off. You've been in those places, I'm sure. You've been in them. We've all been in them. I'm in them almost every day when I come to work. The cars can't get off.

They can't get around the corner. There are too many people at the lights. They can't get off.

For every one of those cars that sits there, not going anywhere or going at a very slow rate, the pollution is enormous. The mileage that the cars get is way down. The amount of gasoline or diesel fuel that is burned is way up—the pollution for literally nothing unfolds where it happens. If it's right there in downtown Oshawa on Simcoe Street, the people who live around there are not going to be hugely impressed.

There are, of course, the other issues. Does the region of Durham want this? I have yet to have a single person from Durham tell me they don't. I get letters; even though I don't represent the area, I get letters. I get phone calls. We get emails asking what we're going to do about this. I have yet to have a single letter, email or anything from anyone saying, "Don't build this." What I do have is mayors and regional chairs, councils, chambers of commerce—I even have hockey teams—phoning me and telling me that they need this. So I think if the people are united that they need and want it, if the people are united that the time has come to build it, all there has to be is a will to do it.

This is going to provide some considerable economic development for the region. When you can move the goods and services, I am confident that industry will want to locate there. There is no worse place for an industry to locate than in a place that is not accessible. There is no worse place to be than where they can't move those goods and services. That's why the factories in Ontario are all along the 401 corridor. That's why they can be all along the 407 corridor, the 404 corridor and the 400 corridor. That's why they're there. They're there because that makes economic sense for them to move the goods and services.

I know that each one of those municipalities has an official plan. Each one of them has site-specific zoning that will allow for the development. They are looking forward to it. They have all of the infrastructure in place that will facilitate a boom. All they need is the highway to go with it.

If it's going to be built, then build it. If it's going to happen in five or 10 years and it can happen now, why not now? That's the whole purpose of this motion: If you're going to do it anyway, then do it now.

One of the best letters I got from anyone came from the riding of Peterborough. A person from Peterborough wrote to me and said that they really, really wanted this. This wasn't traditionally where I would have expected to get the letter, because this is going to be towards the terminus. This was a person from Peterborough who explained how it was going to help that municipality, the workforce in that municipality, the building of infrastructure in that municipality and how they so desperately wanted it. So I was glad, when I saw the list of those municipalities on board, to see that Peterborough too was on board.

This is a pretty simple issue. It's an issue that I hope members in the government party will support, although I

do have my doubts, having heard but one speaker. But I hope they will support it and recognize it's not enough to say that you've made some improvements on the 401. It's not enough to say that you've gone to a church location as a historical site. What is needed is what was promised, what was agreed upon and what the people of the region so desperately want.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I'm pleased to stand up and speak to this bill. Our party knows how important the 407 east extension is to the communities of Durham—I'm a representative of Brock township in Durham—how important it is to Peterborough and how important it is to the city of Kawartha Lakes. We remain committed to building that highway out. The property is being acquired along the way. We see the buildings boarded up along Highway 115.

But projects of this size are complex and require to be built in stages as they go along. If we look at this highway as it gets built out—and I drive it regularly. If it gets built from where it currently ends at Brock in Pickering and goes to Lakeridge Road, there's going to be traffic. Do we keep that section closed until it's finished all the way to the 115? As that highway progresses across Durham region, there's going to be places where it's going to stop and traffic is going to spill off. Once the north-south extension is completed, we're going to have a lot of traffic diverted down to Highway 401 because we'll have a Toronto bypass project.

I'm a little offended by the member from Oshawa—Whitby, who talked about our government's spending on pet projects. I'd like to talk about one of those pet projects that we spent money on: \$4.3 billion to assist General Motors so they didn't close. It was referred to by the Progressive Conservative Party as corporate welfare. What we did was we preserved that company staying in Durham region. We preserved the jobs that were available in that region. It also affected jobs in my area. We had many pensioners in my area who came into my office saying that they needed the support. We stepped up to the plate and delivered on that. To refer to that as a pet project is insulting.

We are proceeding with the construction of this. It's going to make a big difference to the jobs that are available. Going forward, it's going to create the jobs in the area.

I'd just like to read something that pertains to this: "Toronto, February 17, 2011: 407 International Inc. announced today revenues of \$624.3 million for the year ended December 31, 2010, compared to \$560.0 million in 2009"—an increase of \$64.3 million that should have flowed to the provincial treasury, but it flows to Spain.

I agree that this highway should be completed as quickly as possible, and I think we're doing it in a responsible way.

Let's talk about the real reason for this motion. The members of the Progressive Conservative Party are concerned that our government has stepped up to the

plate. We've said we're going to build this highway. We supported General Motors; they didn't support that. We stepped up and we're announcing and doing the work that's moving this project forward. I'm pleased to be a part of a government that has taken this effort in moving forward. I will not support this motion because we're already building the highway.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak, although I must say that I'm completely disappointed in the government's position. I would like to mention something that the member from Thornhill once upon a time said in this Legislature that went over somewhat with humour, and I'll try to inject a little bit of it before I get a little bit more serious: "I don't know what they're smoking," but he wants some of it. What's taken place here and some of the statements are completely avoiding the real issue, which is finishing the 407 and the impacts it's going to have in Oshawa and the community.

The member from Beaches—East York spoke about getting a letter from Peterborough, and I can fully understand why he would get letters from Peterborough, simply because the number two employer in Peterborough is General Motors in Oshawa. Our position and my position have been very clear and straightforward on that issue and what's taking place, and I don't deviate from that; all you have to do is take a look.

I have to congratulate the hard work of Mayor Henry and the council that's taking place in the RAMP it up! campaign. All you have to do is look at the Oshawa website and you'll see exactly what has taken place, from the petitions—the almost 5,000 petitions that were presented in the House today—to going to the various councils and getting support, through Vaughan, St. Catharines and all over Peterborough and other parts of the province, because they are starting to realize the impact of gridlock in the province of Ontario and what this will mean by stopping it at Simcoe Street.

Quite frankly, I think a lot of people need to understand what the real issue is here when we hear about so many side issues that the government has tried to project to deflect the real discussion that we're trying to have, and that is the impact that it's going to have on our community in Oshawa. Should this move forward and end at Simcoe Street, you'll find that the 2,100 vehicles per hour projected to end at that particular site will now flow on to—guess what?—Simcoe Street and the surrounding areas.

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Most people may not realize that there is a substantial amount of funds already invested in upgrades on the roads in Columbus as well as Simcoe Street, with all the new construction of housing straight south of that. If all of a sudden you add an additional 2,100 vehicles per hour that were never anticipated to flow there, they have to go somewhere. They're either going north to Port Perry and through that community—the new mayor, Chuck

Mercier, has supported the position of not ending it there—or they're going south and flowing down Taunton Road and then along Taunton Road, eventually coming out at 35/115, and that's where the dilemma comes forward.

I'm not sure if people understand that one improperly loaded transport truck equates to 100,000 vehicles' wear on roads. If you get one improperly loaded truck—quite frankly, the trucking industry is a great industry and they do a great job out there, but we've got different standards and sometimes you get load shifts and things like that, and lo and behold, one vehicle can equate to 100,000 vehicles' impact on that one road. That's what we're talking about, and not only that, but the new housing development.

Yes, the 407 is going to be the largest economic stimulus in the region of Durham, and we need it to go through. But we need to take into consideration what took place in the past. There wasn't any consideration. It was an announcement made by the member from Peterborough. That press release took place, and that's how people from my community of Oshawa and the member from Whitby–Oshawa's community and the member from Durham's community found out that it was ending there.

The difficulty is the impact on the rates. Families in Oshawa are going to have to pay more, and families in the region of Durham are going to have to pay more. For example, the direct impact as it relates to its ending at Simcoe Street means \$75 million more in taxation required to be put into that particular site, which means an 8% rate increase on the taxpayers in Oshawa. Look at what has happened here in Toronto, where Mayor Ford has now moved down to a zero tax increase because people are paying enough. Our great Mayor Henry has got it down to a 0.7% tax increase, because we realize that people have reached pretty much a limit on everything that has taken place.

Not only that, but if you take the 8% that is being considered it would have to be increased by the city of Oshawa, what about the region of Durham? You're looking at an additional \$230 million, which equates to a 10% tax increase: an 18% tax increase to these individuals to cover a road because it's going to end at Simcoe Street as opposed to where the original agreement was moving forward to.

These are the sorts of things that have to be taken into consideration and weren't.

For those who don't realize it, I was the parliamentary assistant for transportation in 1995 with Al Palladini, bless his soul, and I dealt with Don Cousens on the very same issue in Markham, when the highway was to end at 48. The end-of-line gridlock was going to cause a huge concern to Markham. The end result was that we were able to come together, we worked together as a team—that's what this is all about, working together in the best interests of the people of the province of Ontario—and moved it to a less impacting area, being Brock Road in Pickering. Yes, there was a financial impact on the

region, but we agreed and we sat down and dealt with it. And we dealt with Gary Herrema, who was the regional chair at that time, bless his soul, and then Jim Witty, in order to get it to that point, in order to alleviate the end-of-line gridlock that was going to occur in Markham. It's not going to happen here.

Some of the other difficulties—I've taken a different approach. I've actually gone out and met with land-owners along the line. Leslie, a resident of Oshawa, tells me that he and his brothers have not even been approached regarding acquisition of property. Yet the member from Ajax–Pickering specifically stated that it was going to take two and a half years of acquisitions. Well, if you want it to happen fast, it will happen fast.

Not only that, but it was stated regarding the federal assessment. Quite frankly, when the federal assessment came forward with the extension from 48 to Brock Road, it didn't impact the timelines in any way, shape or form. However, if a government wants to impact it and delay it, that's what will happen. I'm concerned that that may be the end result. We'll blame somebody else as to the reason why.

We need to make sure that the impacts on our community in the city of Oshawa and the region are taken into consideration, making everybody part of the plan and how it's going to take place.

Conlin Road: We understand that upgrades are potentially going in there. Guess what? Those upgrades will need to go all the way past Townline, which is a substantial amount of funds that the province may have to come forward with in order to alleviate the gridlock that's going to impact our community.

Once again, I want to thank the member for Whitby–Oshawa, the member for Durham and the great work that Mayor Henry is doing in bringing to light the impact not only of ending the 407 at Simcoe Street, but also of gridlock in the province of Ontario and what it's costing our economy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Whitby–Oshawa has two minutes for her response.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** We have had a pretty vigorous debate this afternoon on this topic, and I would like to thank the members from Ajax–Pickering, Durham, Beaches–East York, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and Oshawa for their comments.

I really take issue with the comments made by the government members, particularly the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, who indicated that he was not going to vote for my resolution because the government was already going to build the road. In my view, this is just a little bit too cute by half, because the fact of the matter is, there is no commitment to complete this road right now. There was a signed agreement with the Flow agreement, which is being reneged upon by this government. They've only agreed to complete this road to Simcoe Street. There is absolutely no commitment with respect to the full extension. We've been waiting for

years, and now we're going to continue to wait for years ahead.

The other point that I think needs to be made is, it's been said that we're being very parochial with this extension in Durham region. In fact, with the Let's Ramp It Up campaign that has been undertaken by Mayor Henry, which he has taken to communities across the province of Ontario, he has received endorsements from many other communities not in Durham region, because they understand how important it is to the economic development of southern Ontario. He has received endorsements from the city of Peterborough, from Vaughan, from St. Catharines, from Markham, and he's continuing to travel the province to bring his message about how important this is.

It's time for Durham region to develop in conjunction with the rest of southern Ontario. We can't do that until 407 is completed to its full extent to Highway 35/115. We need to end the gridlock for families who don't get to spend time together because they're sitting in traffic, polluting the environment, and for businesses that aren't going to locate in an area where they're stuck in traffic, and for just-in-time delivery. That just doesn't work in the province of Ontario.

For all of these reasons, we will continue to call upon the McGuinty government to honour their original commitment and complete this project.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time for Mrs. Elliott's ballot item has expired. We'll vote on the matter in about 50 minutes.

### RAIL SERVICE

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the province embrace electrification as a strategy for powering commuter rail by:

- acknowledging that the Georgetown South corridor be declared a priority corridor for electrification of commuter trains, recognizing its high residential density;

- ensuring that the environmental assessment for electrification become consistent with current timelines of the six-month transit environmental assessment;

- including human health and property impacts in the environmental assessment for electrification;

- completing the electrification of the air-rail link by 2015; and

- calling on all levels of government to partner in funding electrification infrastructure improvements.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mrs. Albanese moves private member's notice of motion number 63. Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I am very pleased to rise today to bring attention to the importance of embracing electrification as a safe means of powering commuter trains in this province. With particular resonance in communities and neighbourhoods located along rail corridors, especially along the Georgetown corridor, a highly dense residential corridor, this motion supports and reflects the

concerns of these communities, including those of Weston and Mount Dennis in York South-Weston, all of them concerned about pollution from the expanded rail service planned to start in 2015.

Before I start, I would like to welcome constituents, members of the Clean Train Coalition, the Weston Village Residents' Association, and others who are here today. I welcome them to the Legislature and acknowledge their role in working together with elected representatives to advocate for electrification. Residents truly have played a vital role in advocating for a project that benefits the community, and I would like to thank them for that.

I would also like to acknowledge the advocacy of our local city councillor, Frances Nunziata, and our member of Parliament, Alan Tonks. I also want to thank my executive assistant, Maya Gorham, for her assistance and research.

When I first tabled this motion in December of last year, Metrolinx, the regional transportation agency, was still in the process of completing a comprehensive one-year study on the feasibility of electrification for the entire GO rail system.

Last January 16, the recommendations of the GO electrification study were released. The report found many advantages to electrification and, based on the key findings of the study, concluded that there are important time savings that come from electric locomotives. Over the longest trips, time savings would be between five and 10 minutes per trip. With 60% of GO users travelling on the Georgetown and Lakeshore lines, the report recommended both as priority lines for electrification, with the new air-rail link, which will connect Union Station to Pearson International Airport, as the first phase.

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The air-rail link was recommended as first because:

- (1) The link terminates outside Union Station, thereby removing the need to accommodate electrification within the Union Station train shed;

- (2) Metrolinx also owns portions of the Lakeshore and Georgetown corridors over which the air-rail link will operate, making it easier to carry out the implementation work; and

- (3) Infrastructure improvements are already under way in the Georgetown corridor, including the construction of bridges, grade separations and additional track, all necessary for electrification.

These recommendations have particular significance for communities along the Georgetown corridor, a highly dense residential corridor, as I mentioned earlier.

Concerns about the environmental impact of increased rail traffic must be taken into account, and I am pleased that the Metrolinx recommendations gave these important points proper consideration. The report offered more good news, stating that electrifying the two lines could save up to \$18 million annually in operating costs. While initial infrastructure will be costly, the resulting benefit in faster trips and reduced operating costs will greatly complement the objective of getting more people off the

road, relieving traffic congestion and benefiting the regional economy while delivering environmental benefits.

The study also states that electrification will emit less greenhouse gases and would deliver a 94% reduction of GO Transit's future contribution to greenhouse emissions. Furthermore, the cost of electricity is expected to increase at a slower rate than diesel fuel, providing significant cost savings in the long run.

After careful review of the study findings, the board of Metrolinx recommended on January 26 that the province move forward on the electrification of the GO Georgetown and Lakeshore corridors in phases, beginning with the air-rail link. Immediately, the province asked Metrolinx to begin an environmental assessment for an electrified air-rail link. I'm very pleased with this decision because this means that our goal to move forward with electrification has begun, and even the Clean Train Coalition has described this policy shift as a giant step forward.

This decision supports key points outlined in my motion. Having electric trains running through the corridor when the service will be expanded in 2015, however, will elude us. The estimated time frame provided by Metrolinx puts full electrification of the air-rail link seven to nine years from now.

On Friday, February 18, Metrolinx approved a contract to purchase 12 tier 4 diesel engine shuttles for the air-rail link. These are to be the vehicles that will run in time for the Pan Am Games in 2015. These vehicles meet stringent tier 4 emissions standards and are convertible to electric propulsion. Tier 4 standards represent an 80% improvement in quality emissions. My understanding is that because there are no Canadian manufacturers of these highly specialized vehicles, the province is piggybacking on a California procurement and is therefore subject to their timelines. This is also more cost-effective for taxpayers. I'm heartened by the fact that the shuttles are convertible to electrification and pleased to learn that the manufacturer estimates it would take only about two weeks per shuttle to convert.

I want to address now the point in my motion that calls for the completion of the electrification of the air-rail link by 2015. My intention today is to encourage the ministry and Metrolinx to find ways to shorten the timeline for completion of electrification and see electric trains running as soon as possible. One way would be to accelerate the environmental assessment wherever and whenever possible, to expedite the process so that the corridor can be electrified as soon as possible.

I do understand that in some cases consultation with the community may take longer. This is the first time we are going to electrify rail lines in Ontario, and there are bound to be many considerations that will have to be taken into account. The location of power lines and power stations, for example, will need careful review within the community.

We've heard from the experts that electrification takes time and money, so today I call on other levels of government to join us and partner with us in funding the

electrification infrastructure improvements. My federal counterpart, MP Alan Tonks, has tabled a motion in the House of Commons. The motion calls for federal-provincial coordination in support of electrification of urban commuter rails as part of a national transportation strategy.

The province of Ontario is undertaking the largest transit expansion in half a century. Other levels of government are duty-bound to assist in the conversion to electrification, an upgrade to our infrastructure which will benefit the entire regional economy and, at the same time, deliver environmental benefits.

Metrolinx estimates it will take seven to nine years just to electrify the air-rail link, 13 years to reach Oshawa and 17 years to reach Hamilton. The dates reflect three to four years for the environmental assessment and having to locate electrical substations along the tracks. However, I firmly believe that if we continue to push for the required adjustments, electrification of the air-rail link by 2015 is achievable. I continue to advocate for the 2015 date as a target for completion of construction. I believe we can, as a Legislature, set expectations and targets. If we do not, then we are leaving this decision to Metrolinx.

My message to Metrolinx is that they need to work harder, be more efficient and, knowing the importance of electrification to the people living along the corridor, innovate, create and resolve. The year 2015 is still four years away. Ontario has taken a bold step to move to electrification and, to some extent, we are on new ground. While I do not believe we should cut corners, I do think we need to recognize the need to set bold targets to keep our transportation agency and others focused on the important priority of electric trains.

The Georgetown South project and air-rail link project have a long history in the community of York South-Weston. Since I've been elected I've worked, together with the community and at the provincial level, to secure a number of substantial changes to the original GO expansion in the air-rail link proposal and to ensure that we optimize every opportunity. Let's remember that at one point, many years ago, the air-rail link was to fly right through Weston. There have been many important improvements since then.

These improvements mean important investments in our community. We have been able to secure them by working together. On opening day, both GO trains and air-rail link will have a stop in Weston, meaning the trains will travel through Weston at a slower speed and be available for local use. The trains will run under a covered tunnel under two streets in Weston. This will help to reduce noise and vibration and improve safety in this specific area. We will get a new GO air-rail link station, a great benefit for us all.

In conclusion, expanded transit will bring tremendous opportunity, revitalize and increase mobility and accessibility in a community underserved by transit for decades. We will continue to ensure that expanded transit moves forward, not at the expense of the communities along the corridor but to the advantage of these com-

munities. I want to emphasize once more the concerns of all the residents living along the rail corridor, from Weston to Union.

I call on Metrolinx to embark on an aggressive plan to complete electrification as soon as possible, especially now that a most significant study into this matter has been completed.

The first step was embracing electrification; this has been done. The next step is the environmental assessment; this has been launched. I urge Metrolinx to work towards the next step and the next goal, which will see the electrification of infrastructure in priority areas and along the rail track completed by 2015.

I ask all members of this House to support my motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

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**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm participating in this debate with very mixed feelings. I want to recognize, of course, the member from York-South Weston for her initiative. But as a member of this Legislature who has been following this issue and as the critic for transportation, I also have to view with a great deal of cynicism this resolution.

The reason that I say that is that we have seen this government deal with issues on this very same basis many times far too often, where a member of the government finds that a decision of the government is causing them a great deal of agony within their own constituency because they know that the decision that was being made is contrary to the will of the people who live in that riding. I know that the honourable member has been hearing from her constituents, as have others in this House; Mr. Ruprecht is one of them.

There is no question that in this particular circumstance, we have—I don't doubt at all that the member from York South-Weston is sincere in terms of bringing this forward and calling on Metrolinx to move forward with electrification of this air-rail link—no doubt. But the honourable member is not supported by her government. She is not supported by the Minister of Transportation. She is not supported by her colleagues who, at the end of the day, would have an opportunity—and they'll pass this resolution.

But I say to the honourable member, the issue is not whether this resolution passes; it's whether or not action is taken by the government to actually deal with it. We have a very strong indication already that that is not happening.

I'll give you this example: We have nothing from Metrolinx at this point in time, or the government, other than an undertaking for environmental assessment. That's it.

What we have, however, is a very strong indication from Metrolinx that they are moving ahead, not with electrification at all. They're moving ahead with the purchase of equipment for this air-rail link that involves diesel vehicles. Anyone who is looking at this file and who has followed it at all will know that the decision

around this, first of all, is faulty from an administration standpoint; it demonstrates serious mismanagement of this entire file and total disregard for the appeal for this line to be electrified.

Here's my thought on this. Why? The member might say, "Well, why is this happening?" Here's the reason: Because the government—not Metrolinx—has given an artificial timeline for this air-rail link to be completed, in time for the Pan Am Games 2015.

We've had discussions about the air-rail link for years. I applaud the fact that the decision has been made to move forward. But for the government to put an artificial timeline in place of 2015—it has already written the story because Metrolinx is now saying we can't possibly meet that timeline with an electrification project. There are some of us who question that as well because I do believe it is possible.

Then you have to ask yourself the question, why would they purchase equipment that is diesel equipment if, in fact, they intend to have this as an electrified line? The Minister of Transportation answers, "Well, these are convertible, and we can always have them converted." The fact of the matter is that, first of all, the expense to do that is typical of how this government does its business. On any project, they have yet to demonstrate that they do any kind of long-term planning. Where is the cost-benefit analysis for how they're approaching this project?

The estimates in terms of the additional cost for doing it this way, rather than going with an electrification project from the very beginning, are that the cost can be as much as \$400 million. The member will argue that it will be less than that, but the bottom line is that no one disputes the fact that it will be ultimately much more expensive to go the route that the government is taking now.

Here's what I think is happening today. I don't want to discourage the member, but I have to be truthful. I believe that this bill before us is simply an opportunity for the member to say to her constituents and other Liberal members, "Look, the government passed a resolution that calls for electrification. The election is eight months from now. For the next eight months, we can use this bill"—which will be passed by this Legislature, no doubt—"as evidence that we're on your side." What will happen—

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Sounds very good to me.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I know. The member says it sounds good, and Mr. Ruprecht knows well how to deal with these things. No one in this place knows better, whether it's by using a petition or a private member's bill, how to convince his constituents that he's fighting for them.

But here, this is a losing battle, I say to the member from York South-Weston, because the government has already made its mind up.

Here's what should happen: If the minister is serious, the minister should immediately direct Metrolinx not to sign that contract with the Japanese company from whom they're buying those diesel cars; and the minister should

immediately direct Metrolinx to put out a full, open request for proposals for equipment that can, in fact, accommodate from the beginning an electrified line. Why? Because that is the right thing to do; it's the most economical thing to do.

Here's the other thing that the government should immediately do: Pull the plug on this artificial timeline of the Pan Am Games, because what has happened—and by the way, the minister delivered to me a letter from the fairness commission. They wanted to cover their behinds in terms of the question I put to the minister about the fact that the contract for this equipment with the Japanese company is single-sourced, sole-sourced, and didn't have the appropriate process. The Fairness Commissioner said it did, because they went through a process. The Fairness Commissioner, in his letter, says the timeline, the time constraints, really forced Metrolinx to take the position that they did and to use the California open-tender process.

Look, this is a multi-billion dollar project. There is no way that the government should be putting an artificial timeline in place that actually compromises both the project, in terms of its delivery, and the cost.

Dalton McGuinty should stop this. I say to the member from York South–Weston, as much as I appreciate your personal interest in this and what you're trying to do, what this resolution should have said is that this Legislature calls on the government to: (1) remove the artificial timeline; (2) stop this ridiculous bidding process, or this contract, for diesel equipment; and that this project should be revisited and should be constructed as an electrified line, beginning with day one. That's what it should have said. My heart would be in that totally, and I believe that it would have sent the appropriate message not only to the government but also to the constituents of all of these ridings, including Mr. Ruprecht's, that in fact their members are standing with them and aren't simply trying to buy some cover through a private member's resolution. I'm sorry to the member from York South–Weston. I wish I could have been less direct, but that's not my nature.

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I'm going to vote for this resolution because I believe that, in principle, the intent is right, but I tell you, this will have no effect on what the government is going to do. That's the unfortunate side. If we can all convince the Premier and the minister to put an end to this fiasco and save not only multi-millions of dollars, because the project is being mismanaged, but also address the health and environmental issues that are very clearly on the table and that need to be addressed if this is going to be done right.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** There are some days you've got to really love this place. This is one of those days.

I grew up in an NDP/Tory household. I don't know whether it was my uncle the Tory or my father, who was an NDP member, who said it, but he said, "If you ask a

Liberal whether they have principles, they'll tell you, 'Of course, we have principles, and if you don't like those, we've got some others.'" I grew up with that. It's not mine, so don't blame me. It's either my father or my uncle. I like to think better of my friends across the aisle. I really, really do.

But here we have an instance where you've got the government clearly buying diesel trains, and you've got a member clearly calling for electrification now. Something's got to give. Right? You can't stand in two places at the same time. It just isn't physically possible.

By the way, most of what I'm going to say is because of the Ontario Clean Train Coalition. I want to thank them for being here, and I'm going to mention them by name at the end of my remarks.

**Timeline:** You know just yesterday Delhi cut the ribbon on an air-rail link. Their air-rail link is, of course, electric. Like every other major city in the world, it's electric. Guess how fast they did it? Do you hazard a guess, member from Davenport, member from York South–Weston? How fast did they build an electric air-rail link in Delhi? Twenty-seven months.

I think we can agree that we don't need an environmental assessment to show that electric is better. Come on, folks. Every other major centre in the world doesn't invest in diesel, invests only in electric. Why is that? Why do we have to study this for years to discover what everybody else already knows and, as my friend from Newmarket–Aurora pointed out, spend all sorts of taxpayers' money—waste all sorts of taxpayers' money—on doing a job twice that could be done once and well.

Let me tell you that it's going to go rumbling through the member from York South–Weston's riding, my riding, the member for Davenport's riding and others'. It's going to rumble through there. It's not going to be carrying people, working families who have to get from one place to another. It's going to be carrying a handful of wealthy tourists who are going to pay—guess what? This is what they're going to pay for a fare. Not \$4 like they do in Vancouver, not \$4 on their air-rail link. No, no, no.

We are told not the exact amount, but if the members had been—and I wish they had been at the Metrolinx meeting. To stand up for your community, you should go to these meetings. You should go to the clean train demonstrations. I haven't made them all, but I've made some of them. Then you would have these facts at your fingertips.

Here's one of them: They're saying that the fares will be competitive with taxi or limo fares to downtown Toronto. A taxi fare to Union Station is \$53; a limo is \$58. GO Train—guess what? It's \$5.55. The TTC is \$2.50. Compare this with Vancouver at \$4. We're going to be shuttling in luxury cars a handful of tourists—even the athletes aren't taking these—from the airport. And what are we doing? Why the rush? For the Pan Am Games, for two weeks of supposedly green games—not so green.

To the issue of diesel: Is there such a thing as clean diesel? Absolutely not; that's an oxymoron. It's certainly moronic. There is no such thing as clean diesel. In fact, nowhere in the world does this supposed tier 4 diesel exist—nowhere. This is an experiment. Even the gentleman who put forward the proposal at the Metrolinx meeting admitted that, "Well, if we can't convert them, if it doesn't work out, because after all it's an experiment, we can always shuttle them off. We'll use them as diesel trains somewhere else." There's not even a commitment to convert these trains, not even from the board of Metrolinx. There's not a commitment to convert them. In fact, he's already suggesting that won't happen; they'll just be used as diesel trains and moved somewhere else.

The extra rail: \$400 million. This is absurd. By the way, I say there's no clean diesel. It's like talking about clean coal. That's sort of an analogy. And coal is a good analogy. This government has been promising to phase out the coal-fired plants since they were elected in 2003, and every time they talk about it we get a new date. Guess what? The same thing is going to happen with electric trains, and is happening with electric trains. And guess what? Coal usage is up 28% since this government took office—up 28%. Are we going to see the same thing with diesel? Of course we are. They're going to rush through these neighbourhoods, polluting up to 300,000 residents who live near the tracks—30,000 children.

The Toronto District School Board has passed a resolution against diesel trains. They're getting diesel trains. That's what was agreed to be bought. I was at the meeting. I was there. That's exactly what they said.

For those who are watching at home, so they know what's going on here, the member from York South-Weston has introduced a resolution. Well, it's a non-binding resolution. It's a private member's non-binding resolution. It's a nice thing to do, but it ain't gonna stop the McGuinty government—or Metrolinx or anybody—from buying diesel trains. It's a nice thing to do. It's a gesture. I don't want to be cynical either. I think it's wonderful.

Thank God for the Ontario Clean Train Coalition that got us to this point where at least she feels she has to stand up and make a nice gesture in this regard. Really, thank God for all the citizens who have been so active around this issue. We've had thousands and thousands of petitions read into this chamber about this issue. Of course this is going to be an election issue up and down the tracks. We will make it so. Everyone who cares about the environment, everybody who cares about this issue will make it an election issue.

So it's not enough just to say, "Well, by 2050," because we heard the promises about coal. What was the first date? By 2007 all the coal-fired plants would be closed. Now it's 2014. Guess what? That's conveniently after the next election. I wouldn't even put it past this government to promise that they will electrify by 2015. Who's going to hold them to it? That promise means nothing if they're signing on the line to buy diesel right now.

The first thing that has to happen, the first thing we've got to guarantee from Metrolinx about, is that they will not buy these trains, end of story. They will not buy these trains. That's the very first thing. Then we'll entertain some promises about what they might buy. But we're not going to see that.

There was, of course, the statement, "We've been waiting forever for this air-rail link." To me, let's wait another few years and get it right, if we do it all. Also, there are other ways of moving people from the airport to downtown Toronto. It's sad.

Will it cost more? Of course it will. The cost of converting vehicles we guess at about \$1 million to \$2 million per vehicle. So, there you go. That extra track, as I said: \$400 million to install, mostly because of a new tunnel needed on the 401. And of course, this is another point that needs to be made: These diesel vehicles will pollute more than the cars they replace, because they're not really replacing cars; they're adding travel. They're adding tourist travel from the airport to downtown. That's what they're doing, really. And of course, they're only carrying a few passengers per car.

1610

The very fact that we're discussing this is laughable. There's a wonderful letter to an editor that talked about being in Finland. I've been in Sweden—anybody who's travelled anywhere. In Finland, they actually found this laughable, that the Ontario Legislature was discussing investing in diesel. I mean, this is so behind the times. This is absurd. This is beyond penny-wise and pound foolish.

I have to say that if the McGuinty government, the cabinet—we know all the decisions come out of the corner office; we're not naive on this side of the floor—really valued the seats in York South-Weston and Davenport enough, if they really valued their members from those ridings, then they would also step up and make these promises.

After all, the member from Oakville is in the House this afternoon. The member from Oakville: \$1 billion, maybe, they invested to get the gas plant out of his riding because—now, he had Erin Brockovich. Maybe we need Erin Brockovich to come in on the clean train issue. Maybe then Mr. McGuinty, our Premier, will step and up save these, too. Is that what it takes? We're not talking about a dime here, and you got \$1 billion.

All we're asking here, at the end of the day, is to do the same thing: the environmentally wise thing, the fiscally responsible thing and, of course, the absolutely popular thing, because you're looking at people who live along that rail corridor who are going to wake up in 2015 and see these trains rushing past their windows. They're not going to be pleased.

What this government is trying to do is to push that off as far into the future as possible and pretend that maybe someday, if we get very lucky, electrification will happen, but not now. Pie in the sky, but no pie now. Well, you know what? That's not good enough. We want and the people of our ridings want absolute guarantees

that the sale will not go through. We want absolute guarantees that nothing but electric will be bought. We want to see it passed by the Metrolinx board.

I've only got about a minute left, so I just want to wrap up by thanking some very key people who are here. First of all, from the Clean Train Coalition, we have Mike Sullivan, Rick Ciccarelli, Laura Alderson, Elaine Flis, Tony Turritin, Greg Gormick and Mr. Mulally—first name?

*Interruption.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Bill. And from Community Air, Barry Lipton. Thank you so much for being here, for witnessing this, for all your incredible work. You have really stood up for all the residents of our community, and we in this Legislature thank you for that.

Now we turn to the government. Yes, of course, we'll support this motion. We support motherhood and apple pie too, I would say to the members from Davenport and York South-Weston. But you know what? We want the apple pie now. Right? No buys for diesel. No buys at all for diesel: not four, not 12, not 18, not one. Not one diesel train do we want running through our communities, and nothing else will satisfy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to be able to speak in support of the motion by my colleague the MPP for York South-Weston.

You might ask, "Why does the MPP from Guelph care about this particular issue?" Of course, the answer is that the Georgetown South line eventually ends up in Guelph and then Kitchener. This is my GO train to connect to downtown Toronto, so this is actually an issue we care about.

If you are going to get from downtown Toronto to Kitchener and Guelph on a train, you would find that the ownership of the tracks is very complicated. You start out downtown, here at Union Station, on tracks that belong to GO. Then, as you get farther out, you're on tracks that belong to CN. And then as you get farther out west of Georgetown, you're on tracks which originally belonged to CN but which are now leased forever to something called the Goderich Exeter Railway. The Goderich Exeter Railway belongs to an American rail line, so any approvals to talk about anything with them have to ultimately come out of the States.

So it's a very complicated issue if you want to do an EA all the way to Guelph. To get an EA for diesel from Georgetown to Kitchener actually took two years. In order to get an agreement for the city of Guelph to build a transit hub to take GO trains, city buses and Greyhounds all in one hub next to the tracks, it took 12 months. That's just next to the tracks; it took 12 months. In order to do an EA on the whole line, it would take forever.

So I am absolutely delighted that our colleague the Minister of Transportation, Kathleen Wynne, has chosen to initially focus on the piece that can actually be done quickly, which is the air-rail link from downtown to

Pearson, and that she has ordered the EA to go ahead on the piece that can go quickly, because dragging us into it, the people out in Guelph and Kitchener, would just slow things down for the people who live in Davenport and York South-Weston. So the route that we are taking is going to get electrification there much more quickly, and I'm delighted to know that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** First, let me assure everyone that this is a very reasonable position to take, and I'm not quite as cynical as the member from Newmarket-Aurora, because he stands up in the House and—just remember what happened in the Junction triangle, where the trains are going through. It was the Conservative government that we had to push into changing pollution laws, because the Junction triangle at that time, about 15 years ago, was one of the most polluted areas in all of Canada. I know I went through there. We had petitions going through there, we had marches going through there and we convinced your former leader—in fact, Andrew Brandt, whom I respect a great deal; he was the Minister of the Environment at that time. We had to drag him into the 20th century, as you are trying to do today, in a way, and say, "Look, these environmental laws have to change."

Now, the member from Newmarket-Aurora is standing up today and saying he's going to support the petition, in a sort of cynical manner. We will applaud you when you vote for it, and we will also certainly applaud that member from Parkdale-High Park, because in her eloquent remarks she says why, in fact, we should go for electrification very quickly. Now let me tell her and everyone in this House, I can't think of one member who would not want to go for electrification immediately, right now. But remember this, on the opposition side you are unfortunately not responsible for the budget. I mean, by now there's got to be a reasonable way to look at this and to say what we should do now, almost immediately.

Now, I'm not as cynical as the opposition, who are saying, "This is just a ruse to get over the election." That's essentially what you're saying, and that's not really reasonable. That's somewhat unreasonable to say. The reasonable thing to say is simply this: We have a problem here, yes, and we tried to electrify, and there are many reasons. Of course I know one of the members of the Clean Train Coalition, and he's done a great job, no doubt about it, and we thank him for it. But that is the way democracy works, isn't it? What's wrong?

First of all, the government has made a decision because we wanted the Pan Am Games. You supported them. The opposition supported them. We all supported the Pan Am Games. Okay? One of the parts of the Pan Am Games was that we get a train that runs from the airport quickly into Union Station, no doubt about that. But how do we go about doing that? Okay, fine. We made a commitment, but now let's look at what we've done here.

First of all, I try to remind all of you that we're trying to get people out of their cars. Yes or no? That's our

objective. If you went to the pumps this morning, what did you pay for a gallon of gas or a litre of gas? Imagine. A litre of gas today is what? It's \$1.20. Wow. Wouldn't that convince me to take the air-rail link from Union Station over to the airport? Of course it would, and the other way around as well, because it gets more expensive. That doesn't necessarily mean that tickets will get more expensive, although I agree with you in a way—it's too high. Of course it's a bit too high, but it's a reasonable step to take. It's not unreasonable, especially as we heard today. There were so many points being made and so many points being raised.

Now, let me tell you this, especially all the people who are listening to this debate: It is true that all construction that they're doing right now includes a built-in electrification infrastructure, such as bridges to meet the height requirements, track spacing, signal systems, and on and on it goes. In other words, are we doing something about electrification now, or is this just a government piece of propaganda? No, we are. That's what the engineers are doing. It's not into the future; we're doing it now. We're electrifying—we're doing the preparations in terms of ensuring that electrification can take place in stages, and that's reasonable.

1620

Now, Metrolinx, the Premier and our government made a commitment, and the commitment is we will electrify. What should we electrify first? All of us agree the first part of electrification should be the air-rail link, no doubt about it, so let's move in that direction. But why not electrify the other parts as well? Of course, but let's look at the studies. What do the studies say? I think its going to cost us \$1.8 billion—that's the latest figure that I have here—to electrify not just the air-rail link but also the Georgetown corridor, which is important, and the Lakeshore line. That has to be our priority.

How do we go about doing that? What is the most reasonable way to do it? First, you ensure that all the construction includes this built-in electrification infrastructure; that's the first thing. Have we done that? Are we kidding here? No, we have done that. They're doing that at this very point.

What's the second point I want to bring up? That is this: How does a government begin to open the process of ensuring that the right decisions are made? Okay, it's a democratic process. You bring out a policy, and you let the people then respond to it.

This is what the Clean Train Coalition has done and many others, for that matter. I have a whole list of people who have said, "Okay, let's electrify." We agree with electrification. For instance, it says here as you said earlier, member from Parkdale–High Park, the Toronto District School Board has said electrification works. Toronto's medical officer of health: "It's important." Toronto city council has said it's important. Of course, the Clean Air Coalition which is present today: "It's important." The environmental organizations, the Toronto Environmental Alliance, the Canadian Environmental Law Association: "Sure."

But in addition, let me also indicate this: It is also the responsibility of the city to come to the table. What about the federal government? Some of the tracks are really the responsibility of the federal government as well. Where are they? Has Mr. Klees—who has said he's going to support this resolution, and we'll thank him for it—indicated at all that maybe the federal government should come in on this as well and come in and help us with a few dollars and cents? No, not one word indicating that the federal government also has a responsibility here. Not one word. Well, they deserve to come in, too. Why shouldn't they pay as well? It helps all of the residents.

Now, what made this government think about electrification? One, look at this here: There are 300,000 men, women and children living within one kilometre of the track. That's true. I myself went close to the tracks many times, and even though the new report says the impact of pollution is minimal, well, to me that's a doubtful statement, quite honestly. It's doubtful because if you go down there living close to the track, once a week you go down and run your fingers across one of the banisters, the balconies, then go like this, you'll see right away there's much more pollution, much more dust, much more dust particles on your finger than if you would go to Rosedale, where trains don't run by. Yet we hear that this report says it's minimal. Well, it might be minimal to them, but it certainly wouldn't be minimal to the people who have to live near the tracks.

Secondly, what about this business—but I digress. Let me first of all continue and say when the residents are saying to us, "Look, you've got to do this quicker," we say, "Okay, why?" Well here it is. We're going to have 464 diesel trains running daily. This will make it the busiest diesel rail corridor on the planet. Obviously, Mr. Premier, government members, come on now, guys, women and men over here, make a change. I mean come on; something's got to give. Let's go for electrification quicker than before.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Well, thank you.

We're doing that. We're taking the step in the right direction. Wouldn't you agree with that? Is this government not taking a step in the right direction with this resolution? Has Metrolinx not made a commitment? Let's not be cynical. Has the government not made a commitment that we want to electrify? Are we not moving in the right direction? Yes, and that's why it is reasonable to take one step—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The member for York South–Weston has two minutes for her response.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I want to thank the members for Newmarket–Aurora and Parkdale–High Park, the member from Guelph and obviously the member from Davenport, who shared a lot of my same concerns in their debate.

I want to comment on some of the points that were made. For example, the member for Newmarket–Aurora

said that this was probably a losing battle. Well, I do not share his cynicism, Tony; just like you, I don't share that.

In my maiden speech I remember I was advocating for a stop in Weston, and at that time, no one thought that we would get a commitment from the government, so I don't share that cynicism. I think that if we work together, if we make a commitment together as a Legislature, we can set the expectations and we can set the standards and lay down the timeline. I think we can still do it. We're still four years away, and yes, this is to encourage the ministry to direct Metrolinx in order to adapt to those timelines.

Another point that was made was that this is a nice gesture, but that's what we do as MPPs. That's how we encourage the government and the ministries to make our point about what the concerns in our constituency are. This is what we do. The opposition especially knows well what the point of motions and resolutions is. That's what it is. So you know that well.

Why do we need to study this? It's a shared freight and passenger line, which is different from other parts of the world, and we are here debating this because our constituents are concerned about their health and about the property impacts. That's very important—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The time provided for private members' public business is now expired. It's time to vote.

We'll first deal with ballot item number 61, standing in the name of Mrs. Savoline.

#### RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (DAMAGE DEPOSITS), 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (DÉPÔTS POUR DOMMAGES)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mrs. Savoline has moved second reading of Bill 145, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will call in the members after we vote on the next two ballot items.

#### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll now deal with ballot item number 62.

Mrs. Elliott has moved private members' notice of motion number 65. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard some nos.

All those in favourite of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will call in the members after we deal with the next ballot item.

#### RAIL SERVICE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll now deal with ballot item number 63. Mrs. Albanese has moved private members' notice of motion number 63. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1629 to 1634.*

#### RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (DAMAGE DEPOSITS), 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (DÉPÔTS POUR DOMMAGES)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mrs. Savoline has moved second reading of Bill 145, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Bailey, Robert  
Elliott, Christine  
Hardeman, Ernie

Klees, Frank  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.

Savoline, Joyce

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Best, Margaret  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe

DiNovo, Cheri  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Jaczek, Helena  
Johnson, Rick  
Kular, Kuldip  
Levac, Dave  
Mori, Reza  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry

Prue, Michael  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 7; the nays are 26.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negated.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll open the doors for 30 seconds.

## HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mrs. Elliott has moved private member's notice of motion number 65.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Bailey, Robert  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Elliott, Christine

Hardeman, Ernie  
Klees, Frank  
O'Toole, John

Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Prue, Michael  
Savoline, Joyce

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas

Dickson, Joe  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Jaczek, Helena

Phillips, Gerry  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Rinaldi, Lou

Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Best, Margaret  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic

Johnson, Rick  
Kular, Kuldip  
Levac, Dave  
Moridi, Reza  
Pendergast, Leeanna

Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Sousa, Charles  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 9; the nays are 23.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negated.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Phillips has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1639.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, P.C., Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
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Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
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<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
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<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

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Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
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London Stock Exchange Group**

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Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown  
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips  
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
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No. 86

N° 86

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)****Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)****Monday 28 February 2011****Lundi 28 février 2011**Speaker  
Honourable Steve PetersPrésident  
L'honorable Steve PetersClerk  
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Deborah Deller

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Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
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Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 28 February 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 28 février 2011

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to welcome to the House today Al McDonald, the mayor of North Bay and former member of this Legislature.

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I would like to introduce Ron MacDonell, sitting in the gallery. Ron was reeve of Loch-eil township and served on council from 1973 to 2004 in Glengarry county. He was warden of the united counties of S, D and G in 1991, and he was also chair of ROMA in 1990. As well, we have with us his son Darcy MacDonell and his friend Katherine Davis. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I would also like to welcome my sister Wendy to the House today—I see she's here. Her son Ben is page captain in the House this week.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'm delighted to see in the members' gallery today some representatives from the North Bay Literacy Council, which is doing some amazing work. They're here for the Laubach lobby day. We have Linda Fetterly, Johanna Mutch and a fantastic learner, Keith Allen. They're here representing our North Bay Literacy Council, and I understand that Jack is here too. He's not in the chamber yet, but he will be joining us as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like all members to join me in welcoming guests seated in the Speaker's gallery today. This welcome is on behalf of myself and the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. I'd like to welcome students from Sterling Hall School to Queen's Park today. Enjoy your visit to the Legislature.

### MEMBER'S CONDUCT

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On Thursday February 24, 2011, the member for Brant, Mr. Levac, raised a point of order respecting the distribution of what he considered to be objectionable material to members' desks in this chamber. Subsequently, the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, Mr. Arnott, indicated that it was he who had distributed the material in question. The third party House leader, Mr. Kormos, and the govern-

ment House leader, Ms. Smith, also contributed to the submissions on this matter.

Members will know that the only material that is to be distributed in this chamber is that which relates to parliamentary proceedings. The orders and notices paper and the committee meeting notices are two examples of such material. Some of you will have encountered the steely resolve of our intrepid Sergeant-at-Arms or Mr. Butt as they intercept pages delivering personal or non-parliamentary material on your behalf.

As a result, members on occasion have taken to personally placing things such as announcements, invitations or even apples on their colleagues' desks in the chamber. Since most of this material is benign in nature and not, in and of itself, objectionable to any member, the Speaker has traditionally exercised a moderate level of tolerance, provided that House staff or resources are not used to distribute it. This practice, I would suggest, is well known to most members.

It disturbs me that any member would take advantage of the Speaker's forbearance in this regard and risk compromising the neutrality of assembly staff by asking pages to deliver, or even delivering himself, material that is neither parliamentary nor benign but, in fact, quite blatantly political.

That the material in question was enclosed in a sealed envelope signals to me that the member either knew it was inappropriate for distribution in the House or that he was acting as the messenger and was unaware of its contents. Neither possibility gives me much reassurance. I will consider that the member from Wellington–Halton Hills has, by this ruling, been duly warned, and I will consider any repetition a deliberate disregard for the authority of this chair.

Further, I caution all members to refrain from distributing such partisan material in the future in respect to the long-standing traditions of this House; otherwise, as the member for Welland suggests, the Speaker will be left with no option but to apply a more rigorous standard.

I want to thank all the members.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Before I pose the question, I want to offer, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, my warm welcome to

all the municipal leaders attending the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and Ontario Good Roads Association conference.

To the Minister of Energy: These municipal leaders have recently been elected. They have been given the faith of their local residents to carry out and make decisions. However, the Premier is down at ROMA today, hopefully giving an explanation to the municipal leaders as to why he doesn't trust their judgment. For example, Minister, when it comes to industrial wind farms, what makes the Premier so smart? Why does he know more than locally elected officials?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I've already been down to the conference, and I know that my caucus colleagues have been down as well. We're looking forward, as always, to having a record number of ministers attend—many more ministers than attended in the old days.

Let me tell you what I'm hearing from some of the delegates. They're trying to figure out where the Leader of the Opposition stands, because over the weekend, the PC Party's campaign secretary was speaking at the AGM for the member for Nepean, and she said explicitly that they do not know where they stand on these issues. She said, "If you're knocking on doors after May 1, you're going to have an idea of what we stand for."

The Leader of the Opposition's caucus and party don't even know how he stands. How do you think municipal leaders feel? How do you think Ontario families feel? This leader has not indicated—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members from Renfrew, and Simcoe-Grey, and Halton.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Our plan is clear. Locally elected officials should have their say on whether these projects are welcomed in their ridings or not. The minister and the Premier do not trust locally elected officials. You think you know better than everyone else, Minister, and your policy is entirely bizarre. You have communities like Kingston, where the council has suggested they wanted projects, and you've stripped projects away from there, but in communities like my own, the township of West Lincoln has opposed your projects and you're forcing them down their throats. Even the mayor of Kingston, Mark Gerretsen, the son of one of your ministers, says your decision was "purely political."

Minister, what kind of chaos have you created where you're forcing projects on unwilling communities and taking away from those where council supports it? Shouldn't the Premier actually be apologizing today to municipal leaders for stripping away their local decision-making?

1040

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let's be very, very clear—

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Maybe he'll show up someday.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Simcoe-Grey.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pardon me; Simcoe North. My apologies, member from Simcoe-Grey.

Please continue.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let's be very, very clear: A renewable energy application process totally respects the municipalities and their positions. In fact, it's absolutely mandatory that municipalities are consulted. When they're not, the Ministry of Energy turns those applications—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I think the honourable members would like to hear the answer to their leader's question and I would just ask them to be respectful.

Minister.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let's talk about respect for municipalities. That Leader of the Opposition and the government he served in downloaded costs to municipalities for public health, downloaded costs to municipalities for land ambulances, downloaded costs for the Ontario drug plan, downloaded costs for roads and highways—let's see if they'll be talking about that this weekend at the conference—downloaded costs for court security, downloaded costs for Ontario Works, downloaded costs for ODSP and downloaded costs for social housing. Talk about disrespect for our municipalities.

We're working hand in hand with municipalities right across this province, in the north, in the south, in the east and in the west.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The minister knows we respect the decisions of locally elected councils and would restore that authority. When it comes to your industrial wind farm projects, you have one rule, Minister, for your own riding in Scarborough and another rule for everywhere else in the province. Your approach has been the NIMSIAR approach: not if my seat is at risk. We reject that approach. There should be one rule across the province of Ontario, and local councils will have their say under a PC government.

Minister, you have made an expensive mess of our hydro system. One day you do a moratorium; the next day you plunge ahead with projects in communities that don't want them. It's clear that by backtracking here and plowing ahead there, the Premier's motto is that he's not happy until no one is happy.

Minister, will you do the right thing and tell the Premier to apologize to our locally elected officials that he stripped away their power under the Green Energy Act?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** As this Leader of the Opposition continues to chirp about our efforts to turn around his ugly legacy in energy, this past weekend the federal Conservatives announced \$52 million in new funding for clean energy projects. The Conservative Minister of Natural Resources said this: "Moving forward aggressively with investments in clean energy technologies will help us balance our need for energy with our need to protect the environment." He went on to say, "Investing

in clean energy technologies stimulates the growth of a domestic clean energy industry, creating high-quality jobs for Ontarians. Even the federal Tories get it. This is the last political party left in the world that wants to go back to the days of dirty coal and that does not understand or see where the rest of the world is going.

We're a global leader. We're creating jobs right across this province. It's time for that party to catch up with the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Minister of Energy. Here is where we stand: Make sure that we have local officials have their say in these decisions and that contracts are affordable to the Ontario families who get stuck with the bills at the end of the day.

Minister, 75 municipalities and counting have asked to have their local decision-making restored at that level, but when it comes to your approach you have one rule for Scarborough in your riding and one rule for everywhere else. You had your moratorium in ridings, and then last week you announced projects, all of which, when it came to industrial wind farms, were in Ontario PC ridings. Minister, obviously you must be looking at an election map because none of the ridings where you dropped these projects were Liberal-held ridings.

This is the problem: You've focused all decision-making in your office and in the Premier's office. Why are you making decisions based on who people elect instead of what local councils have to say?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We are building a clean, reliable, modern energy system. We're making investments right across this province. I challenge—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Lanark.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Member from Eglinton.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to come with us to Windsor, where 700 jobs are being created, look those workers in the eye and tell them his plan wants to take away their jobs. I challenge him come to Tillsonburg and tell the 900 workers who are getting jobs there that he wants to take away their jobs. Why doesn't he come to Cambridge, Guelph, Hamilton, Burlington? Why doesn't he come to Kingston? Why doesn't he go up to Sault Ste. Marie, where they're producing steel to build our wind turbines, and tell those thousands of clean energy workers that he wants to put them out of work?

Our clean energy policies are impacting positively in communities right across this province. He doesn't get it. He wants to take those opportunities away. The people of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, I'd ask you to look into the eyes of the 300,000 people who have lost jobs in the manufacturing sector largely because of your high taxes and skyrocketing energy bills. I ask you to look in the eyes of Ontario families—average, hard-working Ontario families—who are struggling each and every day to balance their family budget because of your HST tax grab, because of your skyrocketing hydro bills. Look into their eyes and read their lips. Do you know what they're saying? It's time for a change in the province of Ontario.

It is clear, Minister, that you have set one rule for PC-held ridings and another rule for Liberal-held ridings when it comes to your wind energy projects. This decision-making now is purely political in your office and in the Premier's office, and Ontario families are stuck with the bill.

Will you do the right thing, support the PC position, have a moratorium on these projects till you clean up the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'd would be very delighted to share with the Leader of the Opposition the amount of time that I spent with his caucus members out across this province, announcing many of these important job-generating projects, like in Burlington, where his member from Burlington—I've got a photo of her here giving a great little wave to us—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm not showing it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** You made reference to what you are holding in your hand. Please.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I have a photo of the member from Burlington giving a wave of acknowledgement, but at that event she snuck out pretty quick afterwards and didn't take questions from the media because the question the media wanted to ask her was, how can you support a Leader of the Opposition who wants to kill those thousands of jobs that are being created across this province in places like Burlington, in places like Cambridge, in places like Tillsonburg, in places like Fort Erie—for crying out loud—a neighbouring community to his riding, where hundreds of people from this member's very riding are being employed because—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Hamilton East will please come to order as well.

Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The problem is, Minister, that you and your Premier have made an expensive mess out of our hydro system, and you don't respect the fact that Ontario families are getting stuck with the bills.

Your policy of having one rule for Liberal-held ridings and one rule for everybody else shows you have a Premier who is ready to divide Ontario into rural versus urban, to divide those communities from offshore to

land-based, to divide Ontario between Liberal and PC. Ontario families reject that approach of dividing the province. They want one clear rule across the province. Sign projects that are affordable to families who pay the bills, and restore local decision-making to democratically elected councils.

Will you do the right thing and support the Ontario PC position?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** If this Leader of the Opposition and this PC Party actually respected—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** If this PC leader actually respected Ontario families, he would not have voted against reducing electricity bills by 10% through our clean energy benefit, and he would not have voted against a tax cut of 93% for Ontario families. If this Leader of the Opposition—

*Interjections.*

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There's lot of cross-floor discussion taking place. I think it's always helpful that both sides of the House speak to each other, but doing so in a disruptive manner that gets in the way of question period is not helpful. I would encourage those members to have those discussions outside, please.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** If this PC leader and PC Party actually respected Ontario families, they would not have plans to kill thousands of clean energy jobs that those families are counting on. If this PC Party actually respected Ontario families, they would not be opposing every effort we've made to move away from coal, clean up our air and build a healthier future for our kids and grandkids. I haven't met an Ontario family yet that's not concerned about the health or future health of their kids. This Leader of the Opposition continues to place political opportunism ahead of his responsibility to level with Ontario families. Tell them what your plan is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. In 2005, the all-party Standing Committee on General Government unanimously approved a motion to look into gasoline prices and what Ontario could do to protect consumers. Why did the McGuinty Liberals kill that report?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This is an issue that's been talked about for many, many years. There have been private members' bills, I think, on all sides of the House looking for ways that, somehow or another, a province like Ontario can impact these important issues. There's been federal combines legislation that has looked into the pricing of gasoline for decades.

The fact of the matter in this particular case as to what's going on right now—I think Ontario families recognize, when they read the papers, that there is a lot of uncertainty right now in the Middle East, and that's contributing to the challenges that we're seeing at the pumps today. I think Ontario families understand that. I think Ontario families would also recognize efforts to try to distort that and blame it on other things that are not impacting the price of gas today. There are things that are happening internationally, things that are happening in the Middle East—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, there was a study that was supposed to be done. Five Liberal MPPs, including the current Minister of Energy and the Minister of Health, actually voted back then to take a hard look at protecting drivers from being gouged and regulating gasoline prices. Can the Minister of Energy explain to this House why the committee that he voted to establish was never even allowed to meet?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I understand the question from the leader of the third party. I think we all, as we go to the pumps, feel the same as other Ontarians when we see the price of gas fluctuate. Often there are questions raised, normally on the national level, about the fluctuation of these prices. There's the anti-combines legislation. There have been task forces set up federally to look into these issues. I haven't seen a lot of results from those task forces over the years.

At the end of the day, I know Ontario families get it. They understand that when there are issues going on in places like the Middle East that may be disruptive to the flow of petroleum around the world, it does affect gas prices. We're one province in a very large world. Surely the member doesn't think that we have control over the politics in the Middle East. She may want us to have control over that, but that's just something that's beyond our reach.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Once again, the McGuinty Liberals just don't seem to care about the challenges that people are facing here in this province. Gas prices are shooting through the roof. Here in Toronto, people are paying \$1.20 per litre for gas. In Thunder Bay it's \$1.26 a litre. In Sudbury it's \$1.28 per litre. Now, that might not matter to this government, but for people who need to drive to work each and every day it puts even more tension on the family budget, which we know is extremely stretched. How can the McGuinty Liberals sit there and shrug as families take another hit to their budget?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think the NDP are very, very good at defining challenges and very, very good at communicating problems that we all know exist. We're very aware of the price at the pumps because we, like all Ontario families, need to fill up ourselves when we're taking our kids—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The leader of the third party may want us to insert ourselves into the politics of the Middle East. I'm not sure there is a role for Ontario to play over there. But let me tell you what we are doing to help Ontario families as they deal with constrained family budgets.

Ontario's seniors' and property tax credit is providing a considerable amount of support, up to \$1,025 for seniors and over \$900 for low- and middle-income families, along with a series of other tax credits and tax cuts that are going to low- and middle-income families. We understand where low- and middle-income families are at today—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## G20 SUMMIT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Acting Premier. Later this morning, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the National Union of Public and General Employees are expected to release another damning report about the human rights abuses at last summer's G20 meeting. The McGuinty Liberals, who passed a secret law that gave police more powers, played a major role in what happened last summer. Why won't the McGuinty Liberals, then, establish a joint federal-provincial inquiry and resolve once and for all the serious questions that are still outstanding from that summer event?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** As the member would probably be aware by now, there are a number of inquiries that are taking place specifically dealing with this matter. One is the—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** One is—you should worry about Norm Sterling. You should quit putting the knife—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm just going to ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I would be delighted to withdraw the comment—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Just an unequivocal "I withdraw."

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I withdraw.

As the member would know, the Toronto Police Services Board is conducting a review under Judge Morden. The Office of the Independent Police Review Director is conducting a systemic review and taking complaints from the public. Retired Chief Justice McMurtry is reviewing the Public Works Protection Act, and the Ombudsman of Ontario has conducted a review and provided a report,

the recommendations of which are being implemented by the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Hundreds of innocent people were arrested, many just walking through their own neighbourhoods and doing their jobs; frankly, minding their own business. Despite reviews by the Ombudsman that this minister refers to and others, questions still remain about policing policy and training. Those questions are still outstanding. To do it properly, to get at the answers, a joint federal-provincial inquiry is absolutely necessary. Why won't the McGuinty Liberals commit to such a public inquiry?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, as the member has some close connections with the federal leader of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Jack Layton, who seems to be on a very friendly basis with the Prime Minister and seems to be meeting frequently with the Prime Minister, perhaps she might suggest to the leader of the New Democratic Party federally that he direct that question to the Prime Minister of Canada.

As the leader of the third party would realize, this was a federal event. It was convened by the federal government, was organized by the federal government. The federal government was the lead, and a committee of the Parliament of Canada suggested that if there is to be an inquiry, the federal government conduct this inquiry.

**1100**

So my recommendation to the member—I'm always helpful to give advice in this regard—is that she bring this to the attention of her federal leader, who is very close to the Prime Minister and very persuasive with the Prime Minister.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** All I can say is shame on this minister. It was Ontario residents, Toronto residents, who were devastated last summer by their regulation. It was this government that took away the fundamental rights of Ontarians.

Last summer's G20 cost \$1 billion, but that's not all we lost. As a society, we lost some of our sanity, too. Reporters were thrown in jail. One senior had his prosthetic leg torn from his body on the grounds right here at Queen's Park. And innocent people in or near their own homes were kettled for hours in the pouring rain.

It's time we closed off this chapter in the history of our province by ensuring that it never happens again, and the only way to get that assurance is to have the inquiry. Why won't the McGuinty Liberals do the right thing by the people of their province and call a public inquiry into the G20 fiasco?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I say to the member again that she would recognize that the federal government chose to hold the summit of world leaders in the city of Toronto, in downtown Toronto, in fact. The federal government was the lead, the federal government gave all of the recommendations, the federal government was in charge of supervision.

I have indicated clearly that the Toronto Police Services Board is investigating this matter under an esteemed justice, Judge Morden. The Office of the Independent Police Review Director is conducting a systemic review, and that's very extensive, receiving complaints from the public. Former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry is reviewing the Public Works Protection Act, an act that came before your government, and you refused to review it at the time, in 1990, when you had the opportunity to make recommendations on its change at that time.

I note the member does not like—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### ABORIGINAL LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Attorney General. Today is the five-year anniversary of the occupation of Douglas Creek Estates in Caledonia. It has been five years since a group of militant lawbreakers who splintered from the elected and hereditary Six Nations leaders began their occupation in Caledonia. The militants remain on-site, the community is badly divided, and the militants are occupying the abandoned homes of the former Douglas Creek Estates subdivision.

Minister, for some reason, the lights remain on in those abandoned homes in the subdivision. I ask you, why are Ontario families paying the hydro bills for homes that have been turned over to lawbreaking militants?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Here's an opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members from Durham, Simcoe-Grey, Simcoe North, I'd like to hear the answer, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Durham.

Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Here's an opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to show some leadership, the leadership that's being shown by the mayor of Caledonia and Six Nations; by the mayor of Brant, my colleague from that area, and Six Nations; and by the children in Caledonia and Six Nations. They quite understand that the roots of a long-term solution here are two-fold. One begins at the community level: Find ways to bring community members together, not split them apart. The second part of it, of course, is the federal government needs to settle a land claim, and I ask my friend opposite to call the Prime Minister—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. It amazes me. The moment I sit down, the noise will start again.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I wonder if the leaders of the respective parties would appreciate that, member from Halton.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, the book on you is that you have some ambitions, and I would have expected to hear from you some acknowledgement that this has now gone on for some five years and an apology to the people of the Caledonia area and Six Nations for the extraordinary drift in leadership by the McGuinty government that has allowed this to continue on and on. You've disrupted the lives of people in the community. It has cost jobs and it has cost investments for those who live on Six Nations and those who live in the surrounding area. It continues to drift.

Surely you are sending the wrong kind of signal by having Ontario families pay the hydro bills into the homes that are occupied in the former subdivision known as Douglas Creek Estates. Law-abiding Ontario families cannot set a foot on this now provincially owned land. The lawbreakers remain on-site, and Ontario families are being forced by your government to pay the hydro bills.

Minister, will you stop the hydro—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The children in the two communities get it, and I don't know why the Leader of the Opposition doesn't. The children are exchanging art; they realize that the opportunities for them lie in building a stronger relationship. The children and the mayors of the communities get it; they're working together.

Why is the Leader of the Opposition trying to support those who would so discord? Why is he looking for opportunities to take people apart rather than bring them together? Why doesn't he work with the Ontario government to get the federal government to the table in a more active way on a 200-year-old land claim? Why doesn't he look, read and accept the lessons of the Ipperwash inquiry which speak to the dangers of division and the necessity of bringing people together and working through things through peaceful discussions, however long they take? That's the only route. I call for the leader to show—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** To the Minister of Education: Minister, today's Toronto Star points out that rich schools are getting richer while students at poor schools don't get much benefit from the \$600 million fundraised by parents province-wide. In fact, a few well-to-do schools are bringing in more than \$1 million a year through student fees, private revenues and fundraising. Why is it that in today's public schools some children get an education worth a million bucks while others get pennies for their thoughts?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I think it's very important that we are clear: In the province of Ontario, every student in every school receives the same number of dollars of support from this government. Since coming to

government—and we did inherit a school system that had been decimated—we have invested 40% more, we have invested fully \$6 billion more, to support the education of our students. Those investments are supporting students in a positive way that has had positive outcomes because test scores are up, class sizes are down and more students are graduating.

Is there more that we can do? Absolutely. We are looking at funds that are raised within school communities. We have draft guidelines around student fees, and very soon we will be presenting guidelines around fundraising in our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Minister, access to and quality of public education should not depend on the wealth of parents.

Six years ago, the McGuinty government promised to limit fundraising and ensure that essentials are provided by the system. That's what he said. Last September, you said that "at no time should students in the province of Ontario be required to pay fees for any item, any article that relates to their program." Today, we read that parents are fundraising for computers, art programs, music programs and classroom supplies, and they are paying exam fees and student activity fees. When will the government stop playing games and stop parents from fundraising for essentials?

1110

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** As a matter of fact, the honourable member should know that we have posted, very publicly, our guidelines for student fees. The position of this government is, because we have made such significant investments in education, that no student should be required to pay a fee for any program necessity.

We are now going to be posting guidelines around fundraising. That has been very clearly the position, and we are going to follow through on that. I would invite the honourable member to review what our guidelines—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. Minister of the Environment.

Minister?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I would also like to remind folks in this assembly, and for the public to understand, that the NDP have voted against every investment we have made in education to better support student learning. So it really strikes me as strange that in this assembly, they criticize student support, yet the NDP have voted against every one of those six billion dollars that we have invested in our schools. It really is very strange.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'm just going to remind members that it is important that—I don't know whether people were up too late and watched the Academy Awards and have drunk a lot of coffee today, but I just find it's very disruptive.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** Did you see the performance by the Minister of Energy today?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I think I could probably deliver some raspberries to some people in here.

**Interjection:** Ontario raspberries?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Of course they're going to be Ontario raspberries.

I just would ask all members on both sides of the House: Some of the comments on both sides of the House are getting—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Stop the clock.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Excuse me? If the honourable member doesn't like the fact that the clock is running, I'm sorry, but the chatter has been coming from both sides of the House.

New question.

## IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, my riding of Ottawa Centre is home to many new immigrants, and my constituents firmly believe in the important contribution newcomers make in our community and to the economy.

When immigrants arrive in our province, they rely on settlement services run in the community to help them get settled and find a job. Recently, I was disappointed to hear that the federal government slashed \$53 million in national funding to settlement agencies, and \$44 million, or 85%, of that cut was targeted at Ontario.

These actions cause concern for other agencies that deliver front-line immigrant services, like the English Language Tutoring for the Ottawa Community program. These cuts mean that there are fewer resources available to help newcomers succeed in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister tell us how the McGuinty government is helping settlement agencies left in the lurch by the federal cuts?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** First, I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for the question and for his hard work on behalf of Ontario's newcomers.

The federal government's unilateral funding cuts to settlement agencies in our communities are absolutely devastating. I'm deeply disappointed that this unilateral federal decision will result in significant job losses, estimated at more than 1,000 province-wide, and a loss of vital services that are helping Ontario's newcomers hard hit by the recent economic downturn.

The McGuinty government respects the important work of our front-line newcomer settlement agencies. That's why last week I announced that we have created a one-time stabilization fund to assist eligible settlement agencies whose funding was completely, 100% slashed by Ottawa.

I will continue to call on the federal government to reverse their ill-informed, ill-advised funding cuts, and I urge all opposition parties to do the same.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** There is no doubt that the agencies serving newcomers in Ottawa are impacted by these cuts. In fact, every single settlement agency in my community has had their funding cut by the federal government.

Minister, this demonstrates very clearly that we need to have a stable and sustainable agreement with the federal government on immigration. We need an honest partner in our federal government for reliable, adequate funding of Ontario's newcomers, and the province should have greater governance over newcomer settlement and a stronger voice in planning.

As members recall, the Legislature unanimously passed a resolution calling on the federal government to honour the \$207 million still owing from the first Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, which expires next month, and to immediately begin negotiations on a successor agreement. Minister, I understand that once the resolution passed, the federal government agreed, and negotiations are under way.

Will the minister tell us what progress Ontario has made in its negotiations with the federal government on a new—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Ontario is fighting to help newcomers integrate more quickly and strengthen our economy. That's why the McGuinty government is asking the federal government to treat Ontario's newcomers fairly.

I find it rich coming from the official opposition that they're telling us to pick up the phone and call our federal counterparts when they've done absolutely nothing to help our newcomers settle and they have been completely silent in reversing these cuts.

Our negotiations will only succeed if the federal government treats Ontario the same way that it treats Manitoba and British Columbia. We're asking for a reversal of these ill-informed, ill-advised funding cuts. We're asking for an arrangement that is similar to other provinces. This is a shared responsibility between the feds and the provincial authorities that requires co-operation from our federal partners.

Unfortunately, Ontario's repeated requests and our negotiations for a fair agreement that benefits our newcomers have been met with inflexibility. Ontario will continue, however, to negotiate with Ottawa in the best interests of our newcomers and our economic prosperity.

## ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** A question to the Minister of Energy. Five years ago, militants shut down the Niagara-to-Caledonia hydro tower project. Today, never used, white elephant power towers march into Caledonia, unfinished, worthless and wireless; five years of trestles from these power towers being used as blockades, festooned with warrior flags.

Minister, Ontario taxpayers paid for these powerless monuments to your inaction. What headway have you

made since 2006 with respect to restarting this power tower project?

This is an electricity question; it's not a native question.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This is a partnership question. What's really important is that we move forward with all of the communities in the Haldimand tract area working in partnership.

I was just out about a week and a half or so ago to Six Nations, and I met with their chief and council. We had a wonderful meeting about moving forward together.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** This is a canine question.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** About three weeks ago, I met with the new mayor of Haldimand county. We had a very good meeting about moving forward together.

I think the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will tell you that if we can all move forward together, if we can refrain from playing politics with these issues, if we can ensure that we're always encouraging partnerships, if we can work with leaders like the member from Brant on building a green energy future for that community, we can accomplish a great deal.

That's what we're doing: working in partnership, making sure all partners are at the table together. We're going to accomplish great things by working together—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Minister, it's been five years. The Niagara reinforcement project runs the length of the Niagara Peninsula to the Caledonia transfer station and beyond to Middleport—800 megawatts meant to serve 300,000 people. I can tell you this project won't deliver one megawatt until you and your Premier can figure out how to get those wires up.

All the while, Big Becky forges on in Niagara, some \$600 million over budget to supply the increased power—green power, clean power—to the same upgrades that they're meant to deliver.

Minister, hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars are being spent to send clean hydroelectricity to those towers, but there are no wires. How much longer will you and your government permit this construction to be blockaded?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Let's enter into a debate about the importance of investing in transmission and distribution, because when that government was in power they refused to make these investments. Today, we're investing double what they invested in transmission and—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. Minister?

1120

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Since 2003, we have invested \$7 billion in our transmission upgrades. Get in a car in Halifax and drive all the way to Vancouver—5,000 kilometres of transmission upgrades.

We're committed to delivering a reliable system of energy. We're committed to making the investments that that government did not make. But get this: They have

opposed our efforts to make these investments every step of the way. If you don't support the investments, you can't try to take credit for the results. We're making the tough decisions. We're making the investments—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Bev Swerling is a constituent from my riding, and she's at Queen's Park today. Ms. Swerling has always lived a very active and a very healthy life, but now Ms. Swerling lives in excruciating pain and with very limited mobility because she is in desperate need of hip replacement surgery. The surgery was supposed to take place in a Toronto hospital within three months, but recently, the hospital told her she would be waiting at least six months.

Does the minister think it is fair that Ms. Swerling has to live with agonizing pain because their wait-time strategy is clearly failing?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me welcome Ms. Swerling to the Legislature today.

When we were elected in 2003—in the campaign leading up to that election, where we were all out knocking on doors, we heard two stories over and over again about our health care system. The first was about access to primary care. I'm very pleased that we have more than a million new Ontarians attached to primary care than when we took office. The second one was unacceptably long wait times. We have made enormous progress getting those wait times down. The government prior to ours did not even bother to measure wait times. Over the past seven and a half years, we have gone from not measuring to measuring, to publicly reporting, to making strategic investments—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I ask the honourable members—people want to hear the answer to the question.

Supplementary? The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is all fine and dandy to measure, but if what you're measuring is failure, we're no further ahead. It is no surprise that this strategy is a failure, because it does nothing to prevent the growing need for these kinds of procedures, it does nothing to drive innovation and it does nothing to drive efficiency. All it is is a numbers game.

The Globe and Mail recently reported on some of the problems with this government's wait-time strategy, and we see today that it is people like Ms. Swerling who end up suffering. The minister says that she is proud that her government is measuring wait times, but how can she be proud when it continues to fail Ontarians so miserably?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am very pleased to have the opportunity to talk about the results we have achieved when it comes to wait times. Let me share these results with you: Hip replacements are down by 54%; we've

taken 189 days off the wait for a hip replacement. Knee replacements are down by 53%, CT scans are down by 58%, cancer surgery is down by 20% and general surgery is down by 17%.

No matter what the people opposite want to say, our wait-time strategy has been a very, very strong success for this government. We are not done. We still have work to do; we know that. But now we know exactly what the wait times are in every hospital across this province for a number of procedures. We are determined to continue with the success in bringing down those wait times and we are absolutely committed to continuing to invest in health care. We are not committed to cutting health care—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, while countries around the world are dealing with the issues of climate change, we know that the most profound actions to help our environment happen in our own backyard. We all have a role to play by walking to school, biking to work, or taking transit whenever possible.

Today, environmental organizations are launching a website to ask all of us in this House what we will do to protect the environment. Minister, I will ask for them: Will you come clean and actually step up to protect the environment?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank these groups for keeping the environment on the public radar. We have spent the last seven years making sure every Ontarian has safer water to drink, cleaner air to breathe and more green space to enjoy.

It's important to note that many of the policies the groups want protected are the very ones that this government has passed. Our government passed the cosmetic pesticides ban, the toughest such ban in the world. Parents want their kids to play on their front lawns, free of chemicals. We are the only party truly committed to harnessing the renewable power of the sun, the wind, the water and the earth, getting out of dirty coal. We'll ensure that our kids have clean air to breathe, safe water to drink and good jobs in the new economy.

It's important for us to have all of the parties in this Legislature come clean and tell the people of Ontario what their platform is in the coming election. I can tell you that we are firmly committed to making sure that our children have safer water to drink, cleaner air to breathe and more green space to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Minister, thank you for reaffirming the McGuinty government's commitment to protecting the environment. I know parents in my riding will rest easier knowing that pesticides are no longer getting into our drinking water or being sprayed on lawns, and that

we are getting rid of dirty coal, a cause of asthma attacks in kids.

The same website also points out that the Hudak PCs and the NDP don't have a coherent plan on the environment. My constituents are concerned. Minister, can you tell my constituents what they could possibly expect the opposition to deliver in terms of the environment?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I've always said that past actions are the best indicator of future ones. This website that just came out is very timely, because this week is the sixth anniversary of the greenbelt—1.8 million acres of protected land that the Leader of the Opposition voted against. He voted against the Clean Water Act, against 33 additional water inspectors, and a source-to-tap protection system to prevent another Walkerton tragedy. He even voted against the cosmetic pesticides ban, believing that spraying these chemicals indiscriminately was more important than our children's health. But I'm not surprised, because he's one of the few people who voted against the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, all designed just to protect our children.

So I want to make it clear to the environmental groups and to every Ontarian that we are the only party that they can count on to protect the air they breathe, the water we drink and the green space that we all enjoy.

#### FOOD SAFETY

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Miller's Scottish Bakery of Georgetown has been in business for more than 20 years and they make the most delicious Scotch pies I've ever tasted. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's food inspection branch appears to want to put Miller's bakery out of business. The ministry is telling Miller's bakery to spend up to \$50,000 on capital upgrades because they wholesale meat pies. It is a relatively small but profitable part of their business, and crucial to their bottom line. The ministry is treating Miller's as if they were a meat processing plant, but they are not a meat processing plant; they are a bakery. Does the minister know the difference?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I certainly want to thank the members from the opposite side of the House for the question. I can tell you that food safety is our number one priority. I'm going to just speak specifically to the abattoir issue, and then I'm going to expand even more in my supplementary.

We recognize that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. Minister?

1130

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I do want to thank you for speaking to this. Specifically, with the small abattoirs, as I said, I'll speak to that first; then, in the supplementary, I'll speak to that.

We recognize the contribution that our rural, local abattoirs—how critical of a piece they are in the local

food. We committed \$1.5 million in order to assist, to bring—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Georgetown families are paying the price for the McGuinty government being so out of touch that they appear not to know the difference between a meat plant and a bakery.

Because of this ministry's arbitrary decision, Miller's bakery laid off all their staff—eight people—in that first week. It's ironic that Miller's bakery is allowed to sell their meat pies directly to their customers—which implicitly acknowledges that the ministry believes the food is safe—but they are unable to wholesale the very same pies without pushing their business into a loss position, costing jobs for Ontario families. This is overkill. The McGuinty nanny state has gone way too far. It's time for a change in Ontario.

Will the minister commit to reviewing this matter, instructing her staff to find a reasonable solution which will allow this small business, Miller's bakery, to remain open, profitable, employ their staff and serve their customers as they've done for the last 20 years?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I can tell you—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I hope they give me the opportunity to answer this very important question.

On this side of the House, we invested \$80 million in local food. I can tell you that food safety is our number one priority. It isn't on that side of the House. They fired meat inspectors—we hired meat inspectors—as if food safety was not what the people of Ontario wanted. That's why it's our number one priority. It is not their priority. They did not make the investments in local food, they did not make the investments in rural economic development, and then they stand in the House and say that if they were given the opportunity again they would fire meat inspectors again.

They don't care about the quality of food. They don't care about the safety of their food. On this side of the House, we care. It's an important, critical piece, and we stand—food safety is our number one priority, and we're proud of our record and the investments we have made in rural Ontario. I can—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Lanark will please come to order. The insistent heckling is hard on my ear.

New question.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Minister of Health. Leslie Anne Jenkins from London has a rare disfiguring disease. It makes eating a challenge, sleeping difficult and working absolutely impossible. Her doctor says it can be treated with a modestly priced drug, but her request for coverage under the Ontario drug bene-

fit exceptional access program was denied, even though other therapies failed to help her. This minister promised to review this case over a month ago. When will she finally respond to a desperate woman's pleas?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you for the question. I met Ms. Jenkins at an event in my riding, and I can assure you that this is a case that we are working on to ensure that she gets access to this drug if at all possible.

As the member opposite knows, it is not politicians who make decisions any longer about who gets what drugs. We do have a system where experts can review specific cases and review drugs. What I can tell you is that I was very moved and touched by the conversation I had with Ms. Jenkins, and we are working to make sure that if there is a way to fund this drug, we will do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's not like this is one of those really expensive million-dollar drugs. It's a reasonably priced drug. The Ontario government has a responsibility to fulfill the health care needs of Ontarians.

For Ms. Jenkins the clock is ticking. When a sick woman from the minister's own riding has to rely on the generosity of private citizens from Saskatchewan, it says something about the state of health care in London.

When will the minister make this drug available under compassionate grounds through the exceptional access program to help Ms. Jenkins, her suffering constituent?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me repeat: This is a woman who has a very rare condition. We are making sure that her doctor and this—I have to be careful. I cannot speak about cases specifically, but when someone needs access to a drug there are ways to use the system to—we have to rely on experts, and that is exactly what's happening here. The committee to evaluate drugs looks at drugs. The executive officer makes determinations.

This is not a question for an elected person. This is a question for the experts. Heartbreaking as it is, I cannot and will not overrule the experts.

## ONTARIO FILM INDUSTRY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have a question for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Yesterday, as millions of people across North America were watching the Oscars, they were reminded again about the economic power and strength that exists in our film industry.

This industry contributes millions directly to our economy; it creates and supports jobs around the world and right here in Ontario. Ontario, as you know, is at the forefront of film production. We are recognized throughout the world for our expertise, and we need to continue to attract to this market and encourage more global investments.

Minister, what plan does this government have in place to take Ontario's film industry to the next level of opportunity?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member for the question. Our government understands the strength of the film industry. Last year, it generated

over \$2 billion to our economy. But the industry needs to go further, and our government has a plan to support the industry moving ahead.

One, we have invested over \$145 million in the Ontario Media Development Corp., and we are going to continue such investment. Two, we are investing in Ontario's emerging talent. This is why we are supporting world-class training through the Canadian Film Centre—\$19 million in support since 2005.

There's much more to do, but our government's plan to get ahead of global competition is working. This is why we are seeing real results right here in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Investments are critical, no doubt about it. But, Minister, shouldn't our plan be broader? It should give Ontario a competitive edge on the global market. The world must be assured that investing in Ontario makes good business sense. This is one of Ontario's fastest-growing industries. Jobs have been increased by 12% since 2003. That represents 23,000 new jobs. It would be smart to put measures in place that are going to support further growth. We have the locations; we have the experts. All we need is further support to take this industry to the next level, and that is why we need a broader plan, a plan that will make Ontario more competitive—a job plan.

What further support will the minister commit to so that we can give Ontario a stronger competitive edge on the global market stage?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I again thank the honourable member for the question. Yes, investments alone are not enough. This is why our plan to get ahead of global competition includes key tax credits. These tax credits help the industry attract business, from the production services tax credit, to the film and television tax credit, to the computer animation and special effects tax credit.

We are helping the industry put its best foot forward. The total value of these tax credits is \$290 million annually.

Our government believes in an Ontario that is open for business. Our investments, tax credits and support for the emerging talent are opening doors to more investments. Our plan is working. We are moving ahead of the competition.

## MEMBER'S COMMENTS

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Earlier today during a question by the leader of the official opposition, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services made a comment—which you heard and I heard—I found to be offensive. The comment was: "This is a canine question." We know what that is referring to.

There have been comments made on that side of the House that you have ruled against. The standard practice in this House is if a comment from one side of the House causes disruption on the other side of the House and causes a reaction, in the past you have always stood and

asked that member to withdraw that comment. I do believe that today you should have done the same and asked the minister to withdraw that comment so those kinds of things do not go on in this House, these things being thrown from one side to the other that have no place in this House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I want to thank the honourable member for his point of order. I did hear the comment and it certainly didn't cause the disruption that in many cases other language that's used in here has caused. I will say to the honourable member, in future if I hear it I certainly will call any member on that because, as we all know, you can't say indirectly what you would even say directly within this chamber. I just ask all members to be cognizant of language that's been used and any sort of codified language that can cause disruption.

I will give the honourable member, if he chooses, the opportunity to withdraw the comment that the other member took offence to.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Of course. I withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1143 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm proud today to introduce a number of people from municipalities in Leeds–Grenville here for my member's statement to honour Westport mayor, Bill Thake: from Brockville, Mayor David Henderson; from North Grenville, Mayor David Gordon and Deputy Mayor Ken Finnerty; from Edwardsburgh/Cardinal, Mayor Bill Sloan and his wife, Janice, Councillor Pat Sayeau, Councillor Joe Scott and his wife, Cherie, and Councillor Charlie Burrell and his wife, Gail; from Merrickville-Wolford, Mayor Doug Struthers; from Elizabethtown-Kitley, Mayor Jim Pickard, Councillor Rob Smith, Councillor Dan Downey and his wife, Vicki, Councillor Earl Brayton, Councillor Susan Prettejohn and roads superintendent Dale Kulp; from Augusta, Councillor Pauline Cyr, Councillor Doug Malanka and Councillor Bill Pakeman; from Athens, Mayor Herb Scott, Councillor Greg Kearney and roads superintendent Chris Fenlong; from Leeds and the Thousand Islands, Mayor Bruce Bryan, Deputy Mayor Heidi Conarroe, Councillor Velma Kelsey, Councillor Brigitte Lesage-Tye and Councillor Tom Lawler; from Rideau Lakes, Councillor Anders Carson, Councillor Bob Lavoie, Councillor Robert Taylor, and Betty Holman, wife of Mayor Ron Holman.

With us today is—he's not from Leeds–Grenville, but I want to recognize Red Lake mayor Phil Vinet, former Edwardsburgh/Cardinal mayor Larry Dishaw, and Lawrence Levere representing the South Nation Conservation authority. Welcome to Queen's Park, Leeds–Grenville.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Today must be eastern Ontario day because I'm very pleased to welcome today His

Worship, the mayor of Kingston, Mark Gerretsen, who also happens to be my son. He's in the audience here, together with my constituency assistant, Mauro Sepe.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I, too, want to take this opportunity today to welcome all of our guests here from Leeds–Grenville. Particularly, I want to take this opportunity to introduce the mayor of the village of Westport, Bill Thake, and his wife, Marlene. Thank you, Your Worship, for your 50 years of committed service to the people of Ontario. Congratulations.

As well, on behalf of the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, we want to take this opportunity to welcome the students from Sterling Hall who are visiting Queen's Park today. We hope the students enjoy their day here at the Legislature.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BILL THAKE

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm overwhelmed that so many municipal officials from Leeds–Grenville have visited the Legislative Assembly today. Thank you very much for coming.

It is a privilege to rise today and celebrate Bill Thake, the mayor of the village of Westport. Whoever said that there are no guarantees in life obviously never met Bill Thake, who has been a sure bet at the ballot box since Leslie Frost sat in the Premier's chair here in Queen's Park. In fact, his incredible legacy of public service has made him the longest-serving head of a municipality in Canada.

Mayor Thake was acclaimed in last October's municipal election, ensuring that he will mark his golden anniversary in elected office. That's right—such a remarkable level of trust he has built with the voters of Westport that he has had an uninterrupted 50-year run since his election as councillor in 1961. He then settled into the reeve's chair in 1969 and held that office as head of council long enough to see the title change to mayor of Westport in 2004. His term last year as warden of the united counties of Leeds and Grenville was his fourth—another record.

When asked by a reporter about his longevity, he offered an answer that speaks volumes about his integrity. Thake said, "I learned that if you give your word to somebody, you were not to change your mind about it the next day...."

Earlier this month, the united counties of Leeds and Grenville presented the first-ever Bill Thake economic development award for leadership in recognition of volunteer achievements.

It is a fitting tribute for our beloved mayor. A boardroom in the county's administration office also bears his name.

I ask all of my colleagues to join me in saluting Mayor Bill Thake for his unmatched record of political

leadership. On behalf of the residents of the village of Westport and all of Leeds–Grenville, I want to offer my personal thanks to his wife, Marlene, and their family for sharing him with us. Thank you very much.

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I rise today to congratulate the organizers, volunteers and participants who raised \$50,000 for the Credit Valley Hospital Foundation during the Family Day weekend. Abdul Qayyum Mufti, of the Islamic Circle of North America, organized the Family Day Walkathon. Mufti reached out to such community groups as the Shaarei Beth El Synagogue of Oakville, the Halton Sikh Cultural Association, the Mississauga Baha'i Community, the Al-Falah Islamic Centre of Oakville, the Solel Congregation of Mississauga, the Al-Rehman Islamic Centre of Meadowvale and the Islamic Centre of Milton.

In addition to the precious \$50,000 for the Credit Valley Hospital Foundation, organizers brought together both faith communities and families for a bracing walk in the cold winter air. Some 500 participants walked to raise funds for a maternal care unit, a neonatal intensive care unit and a pediatric cancer care unit. These will allow kids with cancer in Peel region to receive treatment close to their families.

Credit Valley Hospital serves its fast-growing community in new and refurbished facilities because our families meet western Mississauga's local commitment when we need to build and keep pace with growth. Thanks also to our Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network for helping us make locally the timely health care decisions that Mississauga badly needs.

### SYLVIA LEAL

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to commemorate the life of a community champion, Sylvia Leal. Ms. Leal was the CEO of PLASP, the Peel lunch and after-school program, for 33 years until she passed away last month. Under her leadership, PLASP, a small child care centre, grew to an incredible 182 school-age locations, 20 early learning and child care centres, and 10 locations for children in the full-day learning program.

Sylvia Leal spent her days at PLASP implementing a vision for what child care should be: a warm, caring environment where children are respected, valued and understood. Because of her hard work and dedication, PLASP and their 690 employees are an award-winning child care organization. They've been named "Best Child Care" and "Best Before and After School Program."

Ms. Leal's passion for children extended far beyond her role at PLASP. She served on the Child Development Resource Connection Peel, Success by 6 Peel, Council of Champions, Fair Share for Peel Task Force and many other organizations throughout her career.

Ms. Leal was the recipient of Credit Valley Hospital's Dr. Robert Bates Award for outstanding contributions to the physical, emotional social and well-being of children. She leaves behind a legacy of excellence in child care throughout Peel and Toronto. It is important that we remember Sylvia Leal for her long-time dedication to children, volunteerism and the community.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm pleased to take this opportunity on the last day of February to recognize Black History Month in Ontario and to offer my congratulations to Black History Ottawa on their 25th anniversary in our community. This year is even more special for such an anniversary, as it is the International Year for People of African Descent, declared by the United Nations two years ago.

Earlier this month, I was pleased to join with local Ottawa artists, activists, youth leaders and people throughout the community to launch Black History Month. It was a fantastic event with a great turnout of over 300 people and a real testament to the good work and well-earned community respect of Black History Ottawa. Black History Ottawa was created in 1986, when 10 different black community associations came together to organize Black History Month activities. These activities honour the numerous achievements and contributions of people of African descent in fields such as sciences, medicine, literature, the arts, sports and more.

### 1310

Moreover, Black History Ottawa works with dozens of community associations and local services to help Ottawans of African descent with employment, family support and public education campaigns throughout the year.

I'd like to personally congratulate Godwin Ifedi, president of Black History Ottawa, who was presented with a United Way community builder award at the launch event.

I'd also like to recognize the other members of the board for their good work in our community, both during Black History Month and throughout the year: June Girvan, Jean-Marie Guerrier, Sarah Onyango and Ketcia Dorsainville.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Since I last rose in this House to warn the government that potentially contaminated fill was being dumped on the Oak Ridges moraine, tens of thousands of trucks have continued to dump fill day in and day out, six days a week, for the last three months.

Because of this government's promises and lack of action, residents no longer feel safe drinking the water from their tap. In fact, recently, Naomi Enns, who lives beside the dump site on Lakeridge Road in my riding of Durham, told the Toronto Star, "We don't feel safe drinking our water." She went on to say, "I don't think we would ever forgive ourselves if we let our children drink

our water and they became sick from it. That's the bottom line."

Safety is the bottom line here. Why won't this government simply stop the dumping until it's clarified that it is clean fill?

This government needs to snap out of it and realize what is going on here; the people of my riding certainly have. Over 200 gathered just a few weeks ago to show their concern and demand action from the government. They have organized meetings, chaired by David Langille, Ian McLaurin and Camilla Marshall of Lakeridge Citizens for Clean Water, a group dedicated to protecting the Oak Ridges moraine and our drinking water.

I call on this government to show the same courage as the citizens' group and take action to protect and preserve our water.

On March 3, this Thursday, Uxbridge mayor Gerri Lynn O'Connor is hosting a discussion on this very topic. I call on the Minister of the Environment to issue a ministerial order to halt—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

#### ERAMOSA KARST

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The Eramosa karst network of sinkholes and tunnels houses one of the longest caves in Ontario. While the karst is protected, the 32 hectares of feeder lands are not. These historic caves and the surrounding wildlife are particularly in jeopardy.

Since being elected, I have called on the Liberal government to recognize the importance of these environmentally sensitive lands. In 2009, Hamilton city council passed a motion that the feeder lands should be protected. The member from Niagara West–Glanbrook, PC leader Tim Hudak, and I co-sponsored Bill 59, the Eramosa Karst Feeder Lands Protection Act, 2010, that would require the government to take immediate action to protect these lands from development.

After years of dragging their feet, could the Liberal government finally be hearing the calls of environmentalists, Friends of the Eramosa Karst, Tim Hudak, the people of Stoney Creek, Hamilton city council and me, and legislate protection from development of these lands?

When the minister from Hamilton Mountain speaks of a fundraiser held by the Friends of the Eramosa Karst on March 5, we anticipate and encourage her announcement to be good news for the feeder lands, finally guaranteeing that these precious lands will be protected now and forever.

#### RECYCLING

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** On February 9, the Minister of the Environment and I had the pleasure of attending the grand opening of a Sims Recycling Solutions Canada facility in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South.

Sims is a world leader in electronics recycling. Their facility will not only create over 100 good green jobs in

my community; it will also make my constituents proud to have a green profile.

This new, 287,000-square-foot facility is equipped to process 75,000 tonnes of electronics annually and offers the most advanced technology. Hazardous substances will be diverted from our landfills while a significant amount of recyclable material will be recovered. Residential consumers, businesses and governments will all benefit from these services.

I would like to congratulate Cindy Coutts, president of Sims Recycling Solutions Canada, for her important role as head of the largest e-waste recycling facility in my riding.

#### VARIETY VILLAGE

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the remarkable contributions that Variety Village has made to the Scarborough South-west community and to Ontario.

Variety Village and its Children's Charity provide essential programs and services for people suffering from physical and cognitive disabilities. Its mission is to facilitate the achievement of life goals through sports, fitness, wellness, educational training and skills development.

Last year alone, Variety Village served over 37,000 individuals, 50% of whom had disabilities. Visitors and guests use an assortment of services at the facility, including the field house, weight room and even an aquatic centre. In addition, Variety Village offers an array of recreational programs, from tae kwon do to reading classes, in order to help invigorate the mind, body and soul.

The good work being done at Variety Village was made possible by the support of our government. Over the past seven years, the McGuinty government has provided over \$9.5 million in provincial funding to Variety Village and its Children's Charity.

The McGuinty government understands the vital services that Variety Village has brought to our community. That's why, when Variety Village was in desperate need of aid, our government provided over \$1 million in emergency funding to help keep the doors open.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the staff and volunteers, under the stewardship of their CEO, John Willson, for the great work they do for our community and for Ontario.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I rise today to recognize some fantastic green energy projects that are being implemented at schools in the Thames Valley District School Board in my hometown of London. The schools received funding made available by the Minister of Education for green energy projects in Ontario schools. With this funding, seven schools will be installing solar panels on their roofs in order to offset a portion of their energy

consumption needs with a clean, renewable energy source.

Clarke Road Secondary School in my riding of London-Fanshawe, Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School, Westmount Public School, College Avenue Secondary School, Parkside Collegiate, East Oxford Public School and West Elgin Secondary will all be participating in these green energy initiatives, and I commend them for their efforts.

In addition to the solar panels, each school will install a monitor in their front lobby so that students can see in real time how much energy their solar panels are creating.

I commend the Thames Valley District School Board for their initiatives in making schools in the London area greener, and I would encourage all the schools in Ontario to consider what they can do to encourage conservation and to implement a green school strategy across the province of Ontario.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I beg leave to present a report on infection prevention and control at long-term-care homes from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and I move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** As Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, it is my privilege to present the committee's report on infection prevention and control at long-term-care homes.

In the past few years, there has been increased awareness about infection control, especially in hospitals. We need to ensure the 75,000 Ontarians living in long-term-care facilities—our parents and grandparents—are protected from preventable infection. I believe one of the best ways to ensure any government partner is doing its best is to require public reporting, so I want to highlight two of the committee's recommendations.

The committee requested that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care respond as to whether it will require long-term-care homes to publicly report influenza immunization rates of residents and staff. The committee has also asked when the ministry will require long-term-care homes to publicly report patient safety indicators, comparable to the information required of hospitals. This would include information such as *C. difficile* cases.

I want to thank the Auditor General, the members of the committee, and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care representatives for their participation in our hearings, and with that I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Shurman has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

## PETITIONS

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I am very, very pleased to be able to present a petition. In fact, I have thousands of them from my riding of Durham. I will read it.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over environmental impacts as well as health, safety and property values; and  
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"Whereas the Green Energy Act"—Bill 150—"allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

I'm pleased to thank the many constituents who have signed some of these petitions, and thank them for their input.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Azilda and Chelmsford, which are in my riding of Nickel Belt:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are being performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens" of northeastern Ontario.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Simon to bring it to the Clerk.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas all Ontarians have the right to a safe home environment; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario works to reduce all barriers in place that prevent victims of domestic violence from fleeing abusive situations; and

"Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act does not take into consideration the special circumstances facing a tenant who is suffering from abuse; and

"Whereas those that live in fear of their personal safety and that of their children should not be financially penalized for the early termination of their residential leases;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Bill 53, the Escaping Domestic Violence Act, 2010, be adopted so that victims of domestic violence be afforded a mechanism for the early termination of their lease to allow them to leave an abusive relationship and find a safe place for themselves and their children to call home."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

#### PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas supportive living residents in southwestern Ontario were subjected to picketing outside their homes during the labour strike in 2007; and

"Whereas residents and neighbours had to endure megaphones, picket lines, portable bathrooms and shining lights at all hours of the day and night on their streets; and

"Whereas individuals with intellectual disabilities and organizations who support them fought for years to break down barriers and live in inclusive communities;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government quickly schedule committee hearings for Bill 83, the Protecting Vulnerable People Against Picketing Act, which passed second reading on October 28, 2010, so individuals with intellectual disabilities do not have to endure picketing outside of their homes during times of labour unrest."

I obviously support this petition. I affix my name to it for Beau to take to the table.

#### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Hamilton.

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers' laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers' legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Madeline to bring it to the Clerk.

#### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a number of petitions from throughout Ontario, especially the Sarnia/Oil Springs area. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas members of the Ontario Genealogical Society are concerned about protecting and preserving Ontario's cemeteries in their original locations; and

"Whereas protecting and preserving Ontario's cemeteries is a shared responsibility and the foundation of a civilized society; and

"Whereas the Legislature failed to enact Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, which would have prohibited the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Cooley-Hatt Cemetery (circa 1786) is located in the Niagara Escarpment plan within Ontario's greenbelt plan in Ancaster, city of Hamilton; and

"Whereas this is one of the earliest surviving pioneer cemeteries in Ontario, with approximately 99 burials, including at least one veteran of the War of 1812;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government of Ontario must take whatever action is necessary to prevent the desecration of any part of this sacred burial ground for real estate development."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

#### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I have a petition which reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the residents and businesses of southern Ontario, oppose any decision to terminate Highway 407 east in Oshawa or Clarington and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proceed with the Highway 407 East extension project as planned and promised, in one continuous phase, from Brock Road in Pickering through to Highway 35/115, with a completion date of 2013."

I affix my name in full support.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** This is certified by the Clerk and addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax and home heating bills."

I have affixed my signature. Thank you, Oliver.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of Jane Zednik and Heather Rutherford of Clarington Wind Concerns, as well as Joseph Hamilton. It reads as follows:

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values;

"Whereas the Green Energy Act, Bill 150, allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

I'm pleased to sign and support it, and present it to page Nicolas.

### ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the Right to Health Care Coalition.

"Whereas the government of Quebec exempts landed immigrants from the three-month wait for medical coverage for a number of conditions, notably pregnancy, domestic violence and serious infectious disease, we, the undersigned, call on the Ministry of Health to provide the same OHIP coverage to newly landed immigrants in Ontario."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Emily to bring it to the Clerk.

### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a similar petition to the last one from a number of people in the Hamilton area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Historical Society, founded in 1888, is a not-for-profit corporation, incorporated by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario April 1, 1899, with a mandate to identify, protect, preserve and promote Ontario's history; and

"Whereas protecting and preserving Ontario's cemeteries is a shared responsibility and the foundation of a civilized society; and

"Whereas the Legislature failed to enact Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, which would

have prohibited the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Cooley-Hatt Cemetery (circa 1786) is located in the Niagara Escarpment plan within Ontario's greenbelt plan in Ancaster, city of Hamilton; and

"Whereas this is one of the earliest surviving pioneer cemeteries in Ontario, with approximately 99 burials, including at least one veteran of the War of 1812;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government of Ontario must take whatever action is necessary to prevent the desecration of any part of this sacred burial ground for real estate development."

Again, as I agree with this, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas PC MPP Bob Bailey has introduced a significant tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural goods to food banks, to help provide tax relief to farmers and assist local food banks; and

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"Whereas stagnating economic growth and increasing unemployment over the last two years have strained the ability of food banks to support Ontario's most vulnerable citizens; and

"Whereas over 25 million pounds of fresh produce is disposed of or plowed back into Ontario's fields each year while local food banks across Ontario face an uphill battle as they struggle to assist those most in need; and

"Whereas PC MPP Bob Bailey's 'A Bill to Fight Hunger with Local Food' provides an inexpensive and common-sense solution to a critical problem for Ontario's most vulnerable;

"Whereas if the McGuinty Liberals truly support a healthy Ontario and wish to fight poverty, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should immediately pass MPP Bob Bailey's bill;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call MPP Bob Bailey's private member's bill, Bill 78, the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, to committee immediately for consideration and then on to third reading and implementation without delay."

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Paul Miller:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST)."

I agree with this and will sign my name to it.

## OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a different petition, but also a protest, from my riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and" indeed "a duty to protect the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier government to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permit process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Minister of the Environment initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process" currently under way "on the Oak Ridges moraine" at Lakeridge Road "until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to prevent contamination of the Oak Ridges moraine" and the associated aquifer.

I'm pleased to sign this in support of my constituents and give it to Amanda, one of the pages.

## HYDRO RATES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt and Timmins-James Bay.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST)."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Nicolas to bring it to the Clerk.

## SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there are over 7,000 people with disabilities waiting for the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services' special services at home (SSAH) funding and almost 4,000 on wait-lists for Passport funding; and

"Whereas such programs are vital and essential to supporting Ontarians with developmental disabilities, and their families, to participate in community life;

"ARCH Disability Law Centre supported by Family Alliance Ontario, People First of Ontario, Community Living Ontario, Special Services at Home Provincial

Coalition, Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario and the undersigned individuals and organizations urge the Ontario government to take quick action to substantially improve developmental services.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"—Ensure that all qualified Passport and SSAH applicants immediately receive adequate funding;

"—Make the application and funding allocation processes transparent; and

"—Ensure that sufficient long-term funding is in place so that eligible Ontarians with disabilities can access the supports and services they need."

I support this petition, am pleased to affix my name to it and give it to page Holly Rose.

## TAXATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Ottawa.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt home heating fuels and gas from the harmonized sales tax (HST)."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Emily to bring it to the Clerk.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL À LA COMMISSION DE TRANSPORT DE TORONTO

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 24, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission / Projet de loi 150, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail à la Commission de transport de Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker.

I should acknowledge with some gratitude that the parliamentary assistant is monitoring this debate via, in this instance today, his surrogate, the member for Etobicoke North. That's a long-standing tradition in this chamber, one that isn't maintained, from time to time, by younger members of the Legislature. So I thank the parliamentary assistant, and in this instance his surrogate, for complying with a long-standing tradition and demonstrating their regard, at the very least, for some modest level of process.

I started the response to the minister's lead on this last week; I didn't have a whole lot of time. We went over a few things. You heard me say last week, and I'll say it again because it warrants being said, that in a free and democratic society, one of the most fundamental of those freedoms is the right of a working woman or man to withdraw their labour. That's not something that we should be dismissing in a trivial way.

I walk to work here at Queen's Park in the morning. I come from the east, at least east of Queen's Park, and as I reach the driveway entering into Queen's Park, on the northeast corner of Queen's Park Crescent East and Grosvenor Street, there's a historical plaque; some of you may have seen it. If you haven't had occasion to stop and pause and read it, I'd invite you to do so tonight. It commemorates the printers' strike of 1872. Let me explain to you what that plaque says.

It says, "The Nine-Hour Movement of 1872 was a broad labour effort to achieve a shorter workday through concerted strike action. The printers of the Toronto Typographical Union went on strike for a nine-hour day in late March. On April 15, they paraded with union supporters to Queen's Park. Near here," where that plaque is situated, "a crowd of 10,000 strong rallied in their support." Now, here's where some things just don't change: "Employers"—that's the bosses—"led by Liberal George Brown of the 'Globe'"—the precursor to the *Globe and Mail*—"had strike leaders charged with criminal conspiracy." So I must say this: The Liberal Party of Ontario has a long-standing tradition of being anti-labour, anti-union, anti-worker. Why, in 1872, George Brown, Liberal, had these strikers charged with conspiracy. "Seeking workers' support, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald passed the Trade Union Act which established the legality of labour organizations. Although certain restrictions remained on union activity, the strike won the TTU"—that's the Toronto Typographical Union—"a nine-hour day and significantly altered relations between workers, employers and the government."

One of the cornerstones in a civil society is the fundamental of free collective bargaining by workers with their employers, with their bosses. An integral part of free collective bargaining is the power to withdraw one's labour. But that isn't the case in all parts of the world. Our frequent guests to this chamber include delegations of politicians from Communist China. Some members applaud them; others prefer not to. But, you see, in Communist China there's no right of a worker to strike. It's considered counter-revolutionary. Stalin's Soviet Union denied workers the right to strike. It was considered counter-revolutionary. And now Dalton McGuinty, Liberal Premier of Ontario, has identified one group of workers—workers who work for the Toronto Transit Commission—and Dalton McGuinty has legislation before this chamber that appears to have, however embarrassing it is, the full support of his Liberal caucus, and will deny workers in Ontario the right to strike.

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Let's make one thing very clear: This is not essential-service legislation. I know that's what the government

spokespeople—that's what the parroting has been. That's what the Coles Notes that are handed out from the Premier's office to the minions who serve that office here in their backbench duties—I know that's what the notes say. But understand the difference between essential-service legislation and what we have here: Essential-service legislation is what we have in the public sector in Ontario, most noticeably amongst, for instance, correctional officers, where, before there can be any strike action, there has to be a successful negotiation with the boss, with the employer, to talk about minimum levels of staffing to maintain core services. That's what happens in the instance of the prospect of a strike by correctional officers.

Correctional officers, through their union—in this case it's OPSEU here in the province of Ontario—are required by law to negotiate, and they have, with their employer—the Ministry of Correctional Services, Management Board, the whole nine yards—what will constitute a minimum level of staffing during the course of any other withdrawal of labour.

That's not what the government proposes here. The government has created an outright prohibition. The government has repealed, the government has undermined, that fundamental right in a free and democratic society, and it's the right to withdraw one's labour.

I know that the bill in its preamble tries to perform some alchemy, if not outright sleight of hand, some legerdemain, by talking about how work stoppages involving these parties—that is to say, the workers of the Toronto Transit Commission—give rise to serious environmental and economic concerns. I was particularly pleased at how cute the environmental concern was. I suppose it's irrefutable: If the buses aren't running and the subway isn't running, there are more cars on the street. Okay. But we're not talking about global warming here; we're not talking about melting the icecap. But fair enough. I'll cut the government that much slack. It was cute to try to throw in that somehow this legislation is a part of the government's green package—cute at the best.

Are there economic concerns? Of course there are. Lord love a duck, for the life of me I can't understand why somehow people don't think that there's going to be an inconvenience when there's a withdrawal of labour by a community of workers. Of course there is.

Let's make one thing very clear: No worker ever takes to a picket line with joy. No worker ever exercises his or her right to withdraw their labour capriciously. If you want to talk about economic grief, talk to those workers who are compelled to take a place on picket lines and what it does to their families and their kids. When they're not working, they're not earning an income. I know that there's some very modest strike pay. So let's understand that first and foremost. No worker ever capriciously casts his or her ballot in favour of a strike, and no worker ever joyfully takes to the picket line.

I said this on Thursday as well. When Frank Stronach of Magna, Belinda's old man, enjoys yet another multi-million dollar payday come the end of Magna's corporate

year, hell's bells, he gets on the front page of Maclean's magazine. There's another glossy profile done of him in the National Post. He's a hero. But when a worker in this province, when a working woman or man, dares to suggest that maybe a 10- or 15- or 20-cents-an-hour pay increase might be in order, they're painted as slothful and indolent and somehow very un-Canadian and unpatriotic. Horse feathers. I'll refrain from quoting any Oscar award winners from last night's television broadcast, but bull spit.

Workers never had anything given to them. Hell's bells, we can go back to 1872 and the nine-hour workday. We aren't talking about a five-day workweek; we're talking about a nine-hour workday. Heck, it wasn't until my time in the 1950s, as I recall—my father was a factory worker; worked in a steel mill down in Welland. I was a kid when the five-day workweek was an issue for working people in this province—like my father, a factory worker.

We somehow seem to oh-so-conveniently forget, all too often and over and over again, that if it weren't for the worker creating the wealth—let's make something clear. Casinos don't create wealth. They separate people from their wealth, but casinos don't create it. Bay Street, quite frankly, doesn't create wealth. It has its Ponzi schemes and it plays fast and loose with working people's pension funds. But Bay Street people don't create wealth. Workers create wealth with their labour.

If TTC workers, people who work in public transit, are important enough to the welfare of the community, to the day-to-day operations of the community, to warrant special attention from Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals when it comes to this obscene legislation, how come they're not important enough to be treated fairly at the bargaining table?

Let's make some other observations while we're at it. It is a given that arbitrated settlements undermine collective bargaining. I've heard the malarkey coming from the government henchmen reading their Coles Notes and their spin briefs, somehow suggesting that a regime that Mr. McGuinty wants to impose on workers in Ontario that prohibits them from striking, denies them the right to strike, doesn't prevent them from collective bargaining. Once again, horse feathers. You know full well that management has no incentive, no motivation whatsoever—the bosses have no intention or desire to sit down at a table and bargain in good faith when they know that, at the end of the day, they'll be able to make their pitch to an arbitrator. That observation has been made so many times.

I refer back to the submission by the Ontario Federation of Labour back in 1956 to Mr. Justice Ivan Rand—the Rand commission. Rand had become somewhat enamoured—I made reference to this a little bit on Thursday past—with the Australian regime of arbitration as compared to collective bargaining. Quite frankly, workers and their unions were frightened that he was swaying that way. So the case was put to Rand very forcefully by any number of authorities that that regime was not a

healthy one. The OFL told Rand in 1966, "Arbitration is no substitute for free collective bargaining. Where both sides know that arbitration is the terminal destination of bargaining, then the vitality and calibre of collective bargaining is greatly weakened."

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The "vitality and calibre of collective bargaining is greatly weakened." This is a given; that is, a settlement or resolution of a dispute that is arrived at through the collaborative work of the disputing parties—the bosses and the workers—is a resolution that is healthier, more robust and more likely to be complied with voluntarily, and nurtures a healthier and more mature relationship between management and labour.

Maybe it's time to look at this consideration as well, because herein lies, I believe, the real futility of this legislation. As I told you, it's a hell of a way to make public policy: Because Rob Ford asked for it, he gets it. We've been through that. It made me recall—some of the folks here aren't old enough to recall, but many are—the old RCA Victor ad. There was the little terrier looking at the speaker of an old-style Victrola, and the title of that painting was His Master's Voice. Perhaps unfairly—I'm not sure—I was immediately compelled to create in my mind the image of the Minister of Labour, like the little dog listening to his master's voice, which in this case happens to be Rob Ford's. Rob Ford may have been elected mayor of Toronto, but he sure as heck wasn't elected to this Legislature, and it seems to me a pretty darned sloppy way of creating dramatic new public policy; in other words, extending the prohibition on strikes to a class of workers for whom the prerequisites don't exist, and I'm going to get back to that in just a minute.

But during the course of fostering that image of the Minister of Labour sitting there like the little terrier listening to Rob Ford's voice, I learned that the dog's name in the painting is Nipper. So, here we are, a Minister of Labour who is but Nipper to Rob Ford. But I shouldn't be too hard on the minister, because we know that this type of initiative doesn't come from the minister or his office. Reasonably, he's a newly anointed minister, and he's a minister in that pre-election period when ministers are discouraged from freelancing and are encouraged to simply follow the line because things are precarious. This stuff comes out of the Premier's office; make no mistake about it.

For the life of me, in view of the fact that he's been a minister for around a month now, and we have seven or eight months till October 6, I'm disappointed that the minister would squander his good name for what will amount to a mere seven more months of limo rides to and from Mississauga. I don't want to turn this into an ad hominem debate; far be it from me. But when I look at the minister's bio, I see that his adult working life was in the Royal Bank sphere, where unions are a dirty word.

Again, that actress last night got away with what she did. If she said "union" in a Royal Bank of Canada board meeting, she would have been condemned. She would

have had to do more than apologize. Her little slip of the tongue, her F-bomb, was minor compared to saying "union" at a meeting of the board of directors of the Royal Bank, or any other banking institution in this country, for that matter.

So I'm not sure; I can't speak to the matter with certainty. I'm not sure that the minister was very strong in his advocacy for workers when it came to this piece of legislation. I try to understand; I try to be an understanding person. When I learned that his whole adult life was spent in managerial positions in the Royal Bank, and again, the banks are the biggest anti-union employers in this—hell, they don't have workers' comp; did you know that?

If you work for a bank, you don't have workers' comp coverage. The banks have been successful at being kept out of the workers' comp regime. If you're a bank employee and you get injured—quite frankly, those injuries tend to be some of the most egregious ones, the things like repetitive strain, the injuries that creep up on you as you get a little older and cripple you—don't even think about workers' comp coverage, because you don't have it, working for a bank in the province of Ontario, in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

Let's go back to where Mr. McGuinty and his gang were trying to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse. In the preamble to this legislation—again, it's not essential-services legislation; we know that. That then throws it into the category—I think the government may have bought itself some grief in this regard—of legislation that prohibits firefighters, police officers and some health care workers from striking. These are, in fact, jobs, careers, professions—policing, firefighting—that have a direct impact on life, health and safety.

Interestingly, Marcus Gee, a columnist for the *Globe and Mail*—the same *Globe and Mail* of George Brown, the Liberal, who back in 1872 tried to have workers convicted of conspiracy for daring to strike for a nine-hour workday—questions very capably the wisdom of banning strikes. He also queries whether the government has bought itself some grief by trying to argue—the government thinks that just by putting it in the preamble, it makes it a reality—that a TTC worker on strike is a threat to public health or public safety.

We recall the garbage strike, and we recall the Premier of the day looking to the medical officer of health to see when the medical office of health would tip its hand and indicate that public health and safety were at risk. That's when the Premier of the day brought in back-to-work legislation, relying upon the medical officer of health, because the Premier of the day knew there had to be some prerequisite met, and that was danger to health and safety. I hear the argument that it's unsafe when people don't have the TTC to take them to work. No, I'm afraid you're not talking about things quite like policing and firefighting.

However, I find it remarkable, because if the legislation passes, and there's every indication it will, notwithstanding that New Democrats want no part of this

bill or what it stands for, I think Mr. Ford is going to have the surprise of his life. He'll swallow his bubblegum when he sees the arguments being made that if indeed TTC workers are the parallel of police and firefighters, then maybe that's something the arbitrator should be considering when the arbitrator considers salary.

If TTC workers are critical to the health and safety of the community, and if they're going to pay for that by having their right to strike repealed by Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals—if you take a look at subsection 10(2) of the legislation, it indicates six criteria that an arbitrator shall consider, although it's not an exhaustive list. One of the criteria is reference to the salaries and work conditions of comparable workers in both the public and private sectors. Fine. You want that comparable, Mr. Ford? Here's Mr. Ford, who says no, no, no, he understands; he's not going to be coming to the province for more money. He's got a \$3-million consultant in the wings; he's going to grease somebody's hand. That's not a gravy train; that's a caviar train. Name some exotic sauce that a saucier would make. Hollandaise sauce: It's a hollandaise train. By God, Mr. Ford the revolutionary has been co-opted so quickly. Now he's into \$3-million consultants. Mr. Ford is also back here at Queen's Park with his hands out.

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Let's get back to the TTC. The minister, when he spoke to this bill the day it was introduced, cited this bit of data: Since 1974, there have been five occasions when the provincial Parliament has enacted legislation to end or prevent a TTC work stoppage, most recently in April 2008. That sends a clear signal—not that the province intervened, because one of the problems, and I was witness to it, was that the parties to these contract negotiations became increasingly aware that the province was going to intervene anyway. The effectiveness of the bargaining table was diminished; it was undermined. I saw it. The TTC's position was, "Oh, what the heck. We'll get back-to-work legislation anyway. Why go to the table and hammer out an agreement?"

But you've also got something far more fundamental, because there are unionized workplaces in this province, both private and public sector, that have never had a strike in their history of 30, 40, 50, 60 years—never had a strike. And there are others with a much rockier history of labour relations where lockouts or strikes are almost the norm rather than the exception. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand that that history speaks volumes about the lack of relationship between management and its workers in any given enterprise.

There's a problem at the TTC. If you don't know that, you're living under a rock somewhere. Look, I read the *Toronto Sun*, too, and I've seen the sensationalistic exposés of one worker or another worker, amongst thousands of workers who work faithfully and patiently with the demanding public and sometimes—many times—less-than-pleasant bosses, where the agenda of the day seems to be the game of gotcha. It seems to me that

there's a problem at the TTC, and I'm not about to tell you what it is. I suspect that workers at the TTC, whether they're ATU workers or others, could tell you what some of those problems are. I'm suggesting that there are some management types who could probably tell you what some of those problems are.

This legislation doesn't solve the problems. If anything, it makes them worse. If anything, this legislation will aggravate the problems because it's an attempt to merely cover things up. You're not getting to the core here. You're not addressing what I believe, were you to drill down, is probably a serious problem when it comes to management and communications, when it comes to a lack of respect for workers in the TTC system, when it comes down to a constant game of gotcha.

I, for one, am just amazed—I told you about the little essay I read a couple of months ago by Professor Frankfurt, the professor emeritus at Princeton University in moral philosophy. The title of the book was *On Bull Spit*, and I'm paraphrasing the title of the essay, because it wasn't really "bull spit," but I can say "bull spit" and I can't say—I probably could if I wanted to, but then the Speaker would say I'd have to withdraw it. Or I could withdraw it in advance, because Lord knows that there's enough of it goes on here, isn't there, Speaker? If you want to see bull spit, you're at the right place.

One of the things that Professor Frankfurt remarked on—and I told you he made the distinction between lying and bull spitting. It helped me to understand that this government can engage in both with equal levels of skill. But he also then talked about opinions. He bemoaned the fact that we live in a Twitter society where everybody is expected to have an opinion, even on stuff that they know absolutely nothing about. And when you listen to the right-wing radio talk shows during the round of collective bargaining with, let's say, the TTC here in Toronto, you're bombarded with people who have opinions about things that they know absolutely nothing about. And one of them, of course, is the myth about the high pay and the soft jobs of TTC workers, and I find that embarrassing. I find it embarrassing that our airways would even host such libel and slander and I find it embarrassing that people who are in a position to put a halt to that don't say, "Please be careful," because that's simply not the case. I find it embarrassing that these people don't rise to the occasion.

As I say, it's remarkable how, when Frank Stronach grabs the brass ring yet one more time and cashes in to the tune of millions of dollars, he's some kind of folk hero, but when a working woman or man struggles to get a 10- or 15- or 20-cent an hour raise or maybe a little safer workplace or maybe a little more control over their pension fund, that worker then is vilified as being greedy and ungrateful. Ungrateful? If it weren't for the TCC workers, there wouldn't be a TTC; end of story. Hell would freeze over in our lifetimes before you'd see buses running themselves, or subways, for that matter, or streetcars.

As I say, we've got a problem when we don't respect the workers who work in a particular working commun-

ity. In this instance, we're talking about the TTC. When those workers become the target of regrettable gotcha games and when those workers become fodder for right-wing radio talk shows and their highly opinionated listeners and callers or, for that matter, for the occasional right-wing editorialist—although, I must say, Marcus Gee was a breath of fresh air because he, notwithstanding writing for the *Globe and Mail*—I don't suppose I should stigmatize him for that. He had a very clear understanding of the risk that the government is taking on with this ill-thought-out, ill-conceived and ill-planned, knee-jerk legislation that's a response to Rob Ford's wishes.

If only it were that easy. I told you the other day that in the township of Wainfleet, the hard-working mayor and four councillors passed a resolution at their township council meeting calling upon this government to increase the food allowance for people on social assistance by \$100 a month. The city of Port Colborne down in the riding of Welland did the same thing. Their city council passed the same resolution. Heck, if that is how it's done, gosh, there are two communities already that want social assistance rates increased by \$100 a month to provide a food allowance that will—if you want to talk about a public safety and health issue, there's one, as sure as God made apples. But no, the government doesn't find itself compelled to respond to those requests. It does, in this instance.

Let's talk about the people in the official opposition, the Conservatives, who support this legislation enthusiastically—or at least appear to. I understand. I didn't expect anything else from them. My colleagues in the Conservative ranks have never been on the side of the trade unionists or the trade union or the worker. They haven't, and they don't pretend to be.

I was here; I remember. I chaired the committee that held the public hearings on Bill 40—Bob Mackenzie, the member from Hamilton, a great MPP, a great trade unionist, a great workers' advocate, a great politician; he passed away a couple of months ago now. I chaired that committee as it travelled across the province and I heard the Conservative opposition to it during the course of the committee hearings: proposals by the NDP on things like anti-scab legislation, embraced by the NDP, and on things like card-based certification. Then I watched the Conservatives, with the Liberals, hand in hand, arm in arm, repeal those core elements of Bill 40 after the Conservatives were elected in 1995.

The Liberals will say what they have to say during the course of this debate, and their opposition to workers and their support for the bill doesn't surprise me. But across the way we've got a gang of Liberals who want to have it every which way. They want to suck and blow at the same time. They want to, on the one hand, say that they're the friend of the working man. I don't think so. Which working man or woman? I'm not sure. Certainly not the ones at minimum wage; certainly not the ones who lost their jobs across the province of Ontario to the tune of 300,000 good unionized jobs in the manufacturing sector—value-added jobs, wealth-creation jobs. They

don't have any friends across the way in the Liberal Party or the Liberal government or the Liberal cabinet, with Dalton McGuinty and his minions in his office.

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Now you've got a Liberal government that's undermining the right to withdraw labour, a core and fundamental right; a Liberal government that is joining the ranks of the People's Republic of China. You see, in the People's Republic of China, workers aren't allowed to strike either. You remember China—Tiananmen Square, Tibet? Those Chinese. Or the old Stalinist USSR.

The Liberals are doing this with such haste, with a sense of urgency. Rob Ford will treat it as an election promise kept, because it does appear that Ford—that is to say, Mr. Rob Ford, Mayor Rob Ford—and Premier Dalton McGuinty have far more in common than they ever imagined.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Buddies.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Tight. Who would have thought? This is Mayor Rob Ford, the one who beat the daylight, who kicked the bejesus, out of George Smitherman.

When I was making reference to the bio of the Minister of Labour, I did note that he was the co-chair of John Tory's campaign for mayor in the 2006 election. That just helps us understand—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Connections.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It fleshes this out. You connect the dots. You know those games you got for your kids or your grandkids where you connect the dots and they're numbered, and eventually a picture emerges on the page? I had forgotten about those until just the other day when I was thinking about how here, you connect the dots and then you see what the real picture is. You discover that Liberals and Tories can share a whole lot, including an intense anti-worker agenda, and they'll lie, cheat and steal, if necessary, to get it done. They're going to insist that this legislation is essential-service legislation when in fact it's not. It's a prohibition of the right to strike; it's not essential-service legislation. It doesn't create that kind of structure that exists for correctional officers and other crown employees.

They're going to insist that they have the right to do it because it has to do with public health and safety, not because it has anything to do with public health and safety but because they said it did in the preamble to their bill. Maybe that's where the Liberals will be hoisted on their own petard, when a judge is called upon to examine the legitimacy of this legislation and to apply principles to the prohibition of the right to strike, as they require that there be a direct impact on public health and safety. I'm not about to say what clever lawyers, far smarter people than I am, are prepared to do with that sort of thing, but obviously the Liberals will have egg on their faces, come the litigation that flows.

I also see the Liberals putting themselves in a position, as we are coming into an election October 6, where they have so much less now to distinguish themselves from the Conservatives in the province of Ontario. Liberals would go to great lengths to try to vilify the Conserva-

tives, to resurrect horror stories, real or imagined. I don't have to be reminded of them; I was there. I have my own views; so do the voters of Ontario.

In this instance I'm particularly proud of Andrea Horwath and the NDP. Andrea Horwath and the NDP are being clear about where they stand, where they stand with respect to this legislation. We're not supporting it; we're opposing it. We're going to be voting against it and will be forcing it into committee. Unless the government uses time allocation, the closure motion, to restrict and terminate debate, we'll do our best to make sure there's at least some access to the committee by the public and by people who are impacted by the legislation.

The folly, the naiveté, the danger that's being courted by this legislation is amazing. Free collective bargaining entails the right to withdraw one's labour. The two are interrelated; the two are one and the same. As I see other organized public sector workers in this province, like teachers, saying, "Oh, well, it's just those transit workers," I would ask them to pause for a moment and reflect, because if it's transit workers today, why not teachers tomorrow? If it's transit workers today, why not community college teachers? If it's transit workers today, I would just go down the list. And don't think for a minute that that won't throw the monkey wrench into collective bargaining and-good-faith bargaining when it comes around time to negotiate a new contract.

The stability of our communities, of our economy relies upon there being this agenda of adversarial, but nonetheless, at the end of the day, joint gain as the goal when you're talking about labour—working people—and their bosses, their management. This government is throwing us into and creating the prospect of economic chaos. If you've got a disgruntled workforce, if you've got a workforce that feels put upon, if you've got a workforce that feels that they're the constant victims of gotcha games, if you've got a workforce that doesn't feel respected and a workforce that feels it's being denigrated at every turn of the way, abolishing the right to strike is not going to abolish those grievances. What it will do is force workers to express their anger, their mistrust of management, their frustration in 1,001 other ways. That will be authored by Premier Dalton McGuinty.

I'm pretty impressed by Toronto's bus system. We've got one down in Welland, too. We have a bus system. We don't have any subways. We used to have streetcars. We don't have any trolleys, though. I know the workers down at the Welland bus service and the St. Catharines bus service. I'll be darned. The Welland bus service is unionized. They've had some pretty fierce rounds of collective bargaining when it comes time to contract, but for the life of me I can't ever remember a strike taking place down in Welland, or St. Catharines, for that matter. What gives here? There's a problem that isn't being looked at, that isn't being probed. I'd like to think it was just oversight on the part of the McGuinty Liberals, but my more rational, thoughtful part—yes, I have a rational and thoughtful part—compels me to conclude that it is an agenda. It's the Wisconsin agenda, if you will.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Crush them. Break them. Break unions. Crush them.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Now is the time to do it, according to the Mr. McGuintys of the world. Now is the time to do it, according to the Liberals of Ontario, and when this engine starts rolling, this ban-strike engine, that locomotive—it will undoubtedly be diesel because it's a Liberal locomotive, dirty diesel—will just go off hell-bent for destruction.

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Again, there are members of the public who say, "Okay, so what if none of them have the right to strike, so what if none of them have any alternative than to submit to compulsory arbitration?" We're starting out with Toronto transit: not just the ATU but several other unions are involved who represent workers in their respective roles working with the Toronto Transit Commission. But think about what it will do to teachers in a public education system who are still struggling with a highly underfunded system and working double and triple duty to compensate for the lack of funding in our public schools, whether it's at the elementary, secondary or, as I said, the college level.

If you want to see all hell break loose, this legislation is but the thin edge of the wedge and there will be more to come. This legislation is licence to any subsequent Parliament—and there will be subsequent Parliaments; there will be a new one come October 6—to simply do as it wishes with workers and their rights here in the province of Ontario.

Hell, McGuinty has already managed to drive 300,000 jobs out of the province—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask the member to refer to the position, not the name.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Hell, Premier McGuinty has managed to drive 300,000 good manufacturing jobs—I apologize, Speaker, I should have said "Mr. McGuinty," to be precise, so that the people know exactly whom I was talking about.

He has already driven 300,000 good jobs out of the province—good jobs, union jobs. When new jobs have been created, they tend to be low-wage jobs, minimum-wage jobs, contract jobs, part-time jobs, temporary jobs—certainly not career jobs. If he wants to start cutting the unions off at the knees—after all, Premier McGuinty has dragged his heels when it comes to card-based certification. He thought it was great for construction building trades—good for them—but not for the most vulnerable workers, the Walmart workers, the ones in the lowest-paid jobs, women workers, immigrant workers who don't have access to card-based certification and who need it most.

He again has limped along with a minimum wage that's below poverty, and shows no intention of ever allowing catch-up there. We see the workers dying at an alarmingly frequent rate in this model of First World country government here in the province of Ontario; workers being sacrificed at the altar of profit.

So I wrap up: New Democrats will be voting against this on second reading, we will be participating in public

hearings, we will be voting against it at third reading and we appeal, however futile that appeal seems, to the Premier's office to please reconsider. Let there be an election campaign on this issue. Let's see what the voters of Ontario really want.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I was hoping, since I have the opportunity to rise and make some comments on my colleague from Welland—I had the grade 5s from St. Jude, and it would have been nice to have them in the House and introduce them. They were here, they had a wonderful time and I hope they will come back.

In response to the member from Welland, let me say that he is always up for a good debate, and most of the time he is very sensitive to the real issues. As he just ended saying that he hopes this will go for some public hearings, indeed, this is the first step. I hope that we will have good input—it's got a long way to go—and hear from various individuals, groups and all the stakeholders who are willing to come out and make submissions.

Let me say briefly, for the interest of the people in attendance and for those watching, that we have the director here from the city of Toronto executive committee recommending exactly the same thing. Then we have a recommendation from the TTC itself declaring the same thing. Then we have the council of city of Toronto requesting the province of Ontario to do exactly what they are requesting, and they did that by a vote of 28 to 17.

This could be the perfect situation where, if the city of Toronto, for once, had sent to the province a reasonable request, if I may say—if we had said, "No, we're not going to deal with it," probably the wonderful member would have said, "Ha, look at this. The province of Ontario has thumbed its nose at the request"—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the member from Welland's comments.

I know that to which the member is referring. The concern is the impacts outside the direct relationship of the workers inside. Everyone is concerned, at least from my perspective, with ensuring that there are fair and reasonable wages and working conditions for all the individuals there.

The member did specifically mention Bill 40 and its impacts and how it was bad. We all hear these things, but quite frankly, I can tell you that in Oshawa, the Oshawa Times was shut down specifically, according to Sharon Young, the managing editor, because of Bill 40 and the inability to disclose the financial aspects of management to the workers during the negotiations—a paper that had been in existence for over 100 years in what has happened in our community. Since then, we haven't had a daily paper. That's just one example of some of the things that happened.

Some of the other aspects that need to be brought forward are—quite frankly, I can tell you that in 1995, in

that era, moving forward right to after 2000, the number one question in Oshawa was, "Do I have to work another weekend?" If you're talking about parties, groups and organizations, or people making a difference in making sure there are jobs out there for people, we certainly had more people working more overtime on a regular basis then than today. You spoke about the 300,000 manufacturing jobs that were lost in the province and the impact there. But the biggest aspect is—now the number one question is, "Do I still have a job?" People are out there looking, whether it's the forestry sector and what we were able to do there in maintaining those individuals—speak to your own members and find out how we worked with your members to ensure that.

The last thing I wanted to say was that there are a number of us who, if you take a look deep inside—I didn't get much support when I tried to change the components of the Free Trade Act so that it was 62% of production time as opposed to 62% of cost of production, which would have had a huge impact on labour in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to stand up and say that my father and my grandfather worked at 1005 Stelco. They'd be rolling over in their graves if they saw what was going on in this House. This is an absolute disgrace. To take away collective bargaining from people is unconscionable.

I'll tell you one thing: In all the years I worked there, I went through two strikes myself. Do you think that company, Stelco, was going to voluntarily give me a raise? Were they going to give me more benefits and improve my dental and eyeglasses? No. We had to go out on the street for months to fight for a 25-cent-an-hour raise. We fought, but we won.

Now this government is going to take away the right, the only thing that strikers have—when you go on strike, the only ability you have to fight ruthless management, ruthless corporations, is through the strike process, to remove your labour. That's the only thing. In the Magna deal, withdrawing the right to strike was another mistake.

Any union member or any union leader in this province who does not fight to maintain collective agreements is going to have a real problem down the road. This is just the start, as the member from Welland mentioned. This is just the start. The train is rolling off the track.

Do you think the workers at Dofasco, next door to Stelco, would have gotten the money and the good life they had? They never had to go on strike because we did, next door. We fought the fight for them. They always thanked us, and they always donated to our picket lines, because they knew that what we got, they would get without having to go on strike. That's the way it works: No company, no corporation, is going to come and hand you more money and more benefits without a fight.

This government is making a big mistake. You can see what's going on in Wisconsin. That's just the start. It's going to happen all over North America.

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**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments? The member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I would say that—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Sorry; I didn't see you. Member from Mississauga-Brampton South.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** We introduced this legislation in response to a request from Toronto city council to declare the Toronto Transit Commission as an essential service and refer all outstanding collective bargaining matters to binding arbitration.

The city of Toronto is an elected government. We are respecting their wishes, and we are just the facilitators. We have listened to representatives of the city and the bargaining agents involved, as well as the Toronto Transit Commission.

This is the right thing to do right now for the city of Toronto and transit riders in the greater Toronto area. The city estimates that TTC labour disruptions cost the economy about \$50 million a day. With a city the size of Toronto, transit is critically important to the environment and economic well-being of the city, as well as the province.

It's the right thing to do, and it's the best thing to do. We are listening to all the bargaining agents and the city of Toronto, as well as the TTC. So I ask all members of this House to support this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Welland has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I have so much affection for the member from Mississauga-Brampton South. Why she allowed herself to be used here today, to be set up with that bit of spin out of the Premier's office, just boggles the mind. The message is clear: "Oh, it's not us. Blame Rob Ford. We're only doing what Rob Ford told us to do." What a gutless, gonadless, gonad-absence approach to leadership, or what they, the Liberals, would want us to believe is leadership. You either agree with the proposition or you don't.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask the member to withdraw that comment, the unparliamentary language.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Which one?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The one that started with "g".

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** "Gutless"? I withdraw. I withdraw anything that was unparliamentary.

This is pathetic. This is outrageous, that they're hiding behind the suit jacket of Rob Ford and arguing that the only reason they are bringing this legislation in is because Rob Ford asked for it. You can't have it both ways. What that suggests to me is that they know that all hell is going to break loose. What that suggests to me is that they know this is going to make things worse at the TTC, and then they're going to be able to say, "Well, Rob Ford made us do it."

He didn't make you do it. This Premier's office chose to do it. Liberals weren't forced to do anything. Liberals

chose to assault workers here in the province of Ontario and to create a path, to create a direction, that is going to undermine core workers' rights across the board, public sector and private sector. The government is simply showing its true stripes. It has no qualms about going to workers asking for their votes, but when workers come to them asking for protection or card-based certification or fair treatment when it comes around to labour relations, this government's nowhere to be seen.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate? The member from Etobicoke North.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I feel it my duty to rise in the House today to contribute to this debate on the second reading of Bill 150, the Toronto Transit Commission Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2011.

I feel privileged to speak to this proposed legislation because it's all about listening to the people of Toronto, their duly elected council, the board that reports to them and, yes, also the unions, and helping them to navigate the legislation when they ask for it. It's about meeting our citizens' needs and acting in the public interest, which is ultimately what we are empowered to do here. It's about acknowledging the unique role that the city of Toronto plays in the province of Ontario, indeed in Canada, and the unique role that the TTC plays in the city of Toronto.

Comme les députés de la Chambre le savent, le 16 décembre 2010, le conseil municipal de Toronto a présenté une demande au moyen d'une motion voulant que la province « désigne comme service essentiel les transports en commun de Toronto ». Notre gouvernement respecte le droit du conseil municipal de Toronto de parler au nom de la population de cette ville. Le projet de loi se rapporte à une circonstance vraiment unique en son genre.

The Toronto Transit Commission was formed in 1925 in an effort to provide quality public transit throughout Toronto and into the outlying suburban communities. It was formed because it was a necessary component of a growing city. The city of Toronto has, of course, continued to grow, as has the TTC. The mutual relationship between the city and its transit system can only grow more important and essential over time.

Public transit is an essential component of a great city. Transit helps people who live all over the city negotiate their way around all over the city. This is true for daily commuters and for people visiting Toronto's many shopping and entertainment attractions. It is an essential part of the lives of Torontonians, whether for work, school, businesses, factories, colleges, universities, hospitals and even government.

As a Toronto member of provincial Parliament, I was heartened to learn that the TTC is the third largest transport system in North America, after New York and Mexico City. To appreciate its scale, I ask this chamber to realize that, on a daily basis, the TTC transports the same number of people who live in Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Sudbury and Windsor combined. The TTC is a vital link that helps make this city work, helps make it great.

The people of Toronto believe in their city, and they believe in the absolute importance of having a dependable, functioning transit system to help keep their city moving. The people of Toronto have made a request of the province through their city councillors, and it was incumbent upon us to consider that request.

I quote for you, Speaker, and for my honourable opponent opposite an excerpt from the motion from the TTC board that was endorsed by city council on December 16, 2010. Through this excerpt, I think we can understand clearly how dependent the city is on its transport system in many different ways.

“Over one million Torontonians rely on the TTC to get to work, school and conduct their lives each day. The city of Toronto is simply not designed to function without an operating ... transit system....

“TTC strikes are an economic, social and environmental disaster that grinds the ... GTA to a standstill. The cost of transit strikes in Toronto has been estimated to be \$50 million per day in lost economic activity. The environmental harm caused by the complete absence of transit and thousands of additional vehicles on the road is incalculable.”

Out of this motion from the TTC board came a resolution by city council with a request to the provincial government to make work stoppages at the TTC a thing of the past. We on the government side of this House have seriously and responsibly considered that request.

In doing so, we considered the following: One and a half million rides are taken on the TTC every business day. The TTC is the largest transit system in Canada. It serves as a vital transportation link for hospital and nursing home workers to get to health care facilities, where the work they do saves and improves people's lives. Children take the TTC to school every day, as do their teachers. Our seniors, grandparents, neighbours and friends rely on the system to get to a doctor, pharmacy, laboratory, rehab facility—the list is endless. Moms and dads use the TTC to drop their kids off at daycare and then continue on to work.

Il y a des milliers de passagers qui n'ont ni le temps ni l'argent de conduire et de se garer au centre-ville, en supposant qu'il y ait des places de stationnement libres en cas d'arrêt de travail de la CTT.

Thousands and thousands of students at our colleges, universities and other post-secondary institutions often have no other mode of transport. The people of Toronto work in offices, factories, retail stores, food markets—the thousands of businesses in Toronto that contribute so much to the fabric of the city. We see those who cannot afford a car or even a driver's licence using a transit system that takes them where they need to go.

But during TTC work stoppages, we see that world grind to a near halt. We see our roads and highways choked with traffic. We see police cars, fire service vehicles and ambulances trying to negotiate through clogged streets and roads. We see many of the most vulnerable in our society left stranded. We see our emergency room and operating staffs, along with nursing-home-care

workers, either stuck in traffic or trying to hitch a ride if they can.

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As a physician as well as a legislator, I will highlight for you in urgent terms that the city of Toronto has the largest concentration of hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies, physiotherapy centres, rehab centres, radiology centres, testing laboratories and other health care facilities in the province. There are 40 hospitals, 84 long-term-care homes and 21 community care centres in the greater Toronto area, as well as many retirement homes.

Dans le grand Toronto, il y a 40 hôpitaux, 84 maisons de soins de longue durée et 21 centres de soins communautaires, ainsi que de nombreuses maisons de retraite. Nombre des membres du personnel de ces établissements utilisent les transports en commun pour se rendre chaque jour au travail.

Many of the people who staff these facilities get to work every day by public transit. I know that that is particularly true for health care staff in my own riding of Etobicoke North. Without the TTC, many of the people who staff Toronto's hospitals would have no way in to work.

We considered the operating rooms and the emergency rooms, the long-term-care facilities and retirement homes, as well as home care health workers. The primary job of any government should be the safety, health and economic and physical well-being of its people. We are the stewards of the greater public good, and I believe the record shows that the health of Ontarians has been and continues to be a priority for this government.

Government cannot afford to look the other way when our largest city and its people come to a virtual standstill because that city's public transport system is shut down. You will recall, Speaker, as I do, Sunday, April 28, 2008, when all parties, including the very eloquent third party, in this Legislative Assembly joined together to ensure that transit service resumed across Toronto.

That day in 2008 was unique and important for many reasons, not the least of which was the all-party support that was achieved in determining that the work stoppage at the TTC could not be allowed to continue. My colleagues in the PC Party and the NDP, under the leadership of their House leader the member from Welland, joined the government to get the parties back at the table and get the people of Toronto moving again. In 2008, partisan differences were put aside. Why? In the greater interest of the people of Toronto. Public policy took precedence over partisan politics.

That type of all-party consensus is likely rare, but we on the government side are hopeful that the official opposition and the third party will support this important government initiative on behalf of the people of Toronto.

As a Toronto member, I am very well aware of the role that the TTC plays in the lives of my constituents, and I'm pleased that the government is taking this step. The constituents of my riding in Etobicoke North have been in touch with me to express their support for this bill. They have told me how important dependable,

uninterrupted TTC services are for them in their daily lives. They have told me that they are pleased to see the government acting, taking a fair-minded approach that continues to respect the collective bargaining process.

Toutefois, dans les cas où les parties se trouveraient dans une impasse de la négociation collective, les questions en suspens seraient résolues suivant un processus équitable et neutre de tiers : l'arbitrage exécutoire des intérêts.

My constituents are a diverse reflection of Torontonians as a whole, and they are telling me that they need the TTC. I'm sure that my colleagues from all parties are hearing this. It is important to get this type of feedback from our constituents because it reinforces what the numbers so clearly tell us about the importance of the TTC to the lives of Torontonians.

The statistics are impressive, and I'll share some with you: 1.5 million rides are taken on the TTC each and every business day. In 2009, there were almost half a billion passenger trips on the TTC. The TTC has over 1,600 accessible buses in its system, travelling over 150 accessible bus routes. In addition, there are approximately 200 light rail vehicles, along with about 50 LRV routes. When you take these individual pieces and put them together, you get the full picture of what Canada's largest mass transport system looks like.

As a medical doctor, I'm keenly aware of the legitimate and research-based impact of the overall effect on human health and a clean environment. The air that we breathe has a significant impact on our overall well-being. As a government, we have acknowledged that we have been working diligently towards cleaner air across Ontario. I can tell you, for example, that our air quality directly impacts the number of attacks of asthma, COPD, chronic bronchitis, emphysema and airborne allergies.

It is obvious that the public transport system, especially in the city the size of Toronto, is a key element in our efforts to move to a cleaner, greener and healthier society.

The Toronto Transit Commission estimates that a subway train replaces over 900 cars at peak times on most routes. The TTC also estimates that, on average, one bus replaces 50 cars, and a four-car Scarborough rapid transit system train at rush hour takes approximately 200 cars off the road. Obviously, TTC work stoppages have a major impact on automobile use, and the emissions from this increase from cars on the road has a significant impact on the environment.

A 2008 report prepared for the Amalgamated Transit Union, ATU Local 113, estimated that without TTC services there would be in the order of 200,000 additional cars on the road in Toronto and about 350,000 new car trips on any business day. It's a significant amount of added pollution: fossil fuel gases, particulate matter, airborne pollutants and so on.

The TTC is large, complex and of vital importance to the health, safety, economic and social well-being of the people of Toronto. It is for these reasons that our

government has taken the request by Toronto city council to prohibit work stoppages on the TTC seriously.

In saying that, however, it is important to underline with due respect to the way my colleague opposite honours labour relations in Ontario, even going so far back as 140 years. Our government has spoken with the TTC, with the city and the impacted unions. Following these consultations, we were left with a decision to make. By introducing this legislation, we are taking responsible, fair and reasonable action on behalf of the people of Toronto.

Ensuring continuity of service at the TTC is the right thing to do. Through the government's consultations with the parties, it has become clear that if the government were to act, doing so quickly would be to the benefit of all involved. The members of this House and many Torontonians are aware that the collective agreements between the TTC and its unions expire on March 31, 2011. The parties have a right to know the rules that will apply in the coming round of collective bargaining.

We are supportive of the collective bargaining process and believe that the best agreements are those that are reached at the bargaining table. A key component of the impending collective bargaining process will be knowing the rules under which the parties are operating. By acting now, and if this proposed legislation passes, the parties will benefit from that understanding.

I want to speak for a moment on the labour relations record of the McGuinty government. As the Minister of Labour has said, our government is proud of its labour relations record over the seven-plus years we have had the privilege of serving the people of Ontario. Indicative of those labour relations and that climate in the province is that over the past year, from January 1, 2010, to December 31, 2010, more than 99% of labour contract negotiations have resulted in settlements with no work stoppages. In fact, over the past number of years, approximately 97% of negotiations have resulted in settlements with no strikes and no lockouts. This is an outstanding result that I believe all members of this House can cite with pride.

Maintaining an environment that promotes the fair and stable labour relations that are instrumental to Ontario's economic success has been an important priority for this government. We all know that some negotiations can be very challenging. Speaking with the minister, I know that he has, as do we all, the utmost respect for individuals who represent employers and unions at the bargaining table, including many who are here to listen to me in person. These individuals work together through negotiations to develop an agreement that reflects the needs of both parties.

Agreements reached at the negotiating table are the best agreements, the most stable agreements and most productive agreements. We have made it clear that nothing in our proposed legislation—nothing—prevents or limits the parties from collective bargaining. On the contrary, the bill only prohibits strikes and lockouts at the TTC.

Notre gouvernement croit fermement au droit de la négociation collective et au fait que les meilleures

conventions collectives sont celles qu'on conclut à la table de négociation. Le projet de loi ne supprimerait ni ne limiterait le droit à la négociation. La loi proposée n'interdirait que les grèves et les lock-out.

Our government has listened to city council's request. This bill acknowledges that the safety, health, economic and social well-being of Torontonians is significantly impacted by dependable access to their public transport system. We know that the absolutely vital role that the TTC plays in the lives of Torontonians is what is under consideration today. We know that all parties have agreed previously, when a work stoppage occurred, that the best thing to do, the responsible thing to do on behalf of the people of Toronto, was to ensure that the TTC got back to work—most recently, as you will recall, in April 2008.

**1450**

By introducing this bill, we are again acting responsibly on behalf of the people of Toronto. Our government respects the right of Toronto city council to make a request on behalf of the people of Toronto. Our response to this request takes into account the unique situation in Toronto and the unique role that the TTC plays within that city.

Notre gouvernement respecte le droit du conseil municipal de Toronto de parler au nom de la population de cette ville. Notre réponse à la demande de la ville de Toronto tient compte des préoccupations de cette ville au sujet des circonstances uniques en leur genre de Toronto et de son réseau de transports en commun.

The safety and health of our citizens is of the highest priority for our government. We say to the people of Toronto, "We have listened." We have said to these citizens, "We care about your well-being." In this bill, we have responded to Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I find myself in a very unique situation in this House in that this government has finally brought in a bill that I can agree with. I don't agree with it entirely. There are some aspects of the bill, in the appointment of the mediator and the appointment of the arbitrator, which I have some reservations about. I think there would be better ways to do that, but I support the essence of the bill.

It does centre around the rather huge margin that the mayor of Toronto received from the people of Toronto, and I think it goes back to the very basics of our democratic system: Does the government lead the province or does the government react to the needs of the province? I would be a strong supporter of the second, in that the people of the province lead the government. In this case, it has been very clear that the people of Toronto respect the difficulties they've had in the past and they don't wish to be put in that situation again. They feel very strongly, given that the mayor of Toronto had a huge mandate and that declaring the TTC an essential service was a major plank in his platform. I therefore would find it difficult not to support this piece of legislation as it moves through the House.

Again, there would be some nuances that could be changed. I'm sure the government will take this to committee and have hearings on the subject, because it does disenfranchise some members of our society who have had this right in the past. Therefore, I would think that there would have to be some hearings on this particular subject, on this particular bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I should indicate that NDP leader Andrea Horwath will be speaking to this bill later today, as will Paul Miller, our member for Hamilton East.

We're being told about problems at the TTC, problems that are long-standing, problems that surely stem from faults at the management level as much as, if not more than, anything else. Prohibiting the right to strike by TTC workers, whether they're ATU or CUPE or CAW—what have you—is not going to address any of those problems. If anything, because it undermines free collective bargaining—the right to withdraw labour is a critical part of free collective bargaining—it will probably aggravate the unhealthy environment at the TTC and will increase consumer concern about the performance of their public transit system.

Mr. Ford, the mayor, may well see himself as some sort of a hero as a result of this assault on workers and their rights. Mr. McGuinty may well see himself as riding some sort of right-wing populist wave. But neither Mr. McGuinty nor his caucus members are demonstrating any serious reflection on the impact, the repercussions and the implications of this attack on fundamental rights of working people in the context of a free, collective bargaining system. This will have major, major, major consequences for the people of Toronto and Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I look forward to when I'll have a bit more time to address the issue a bit more in depth, but I'd like to comment on the member from Etobicoke North—by the way, I share a boundary. We are divided solely by the wonderful Humber River on what would be my west side and his east side. Of course, we have Steeles all the way to the north end.

As well, I have people in my area, especially in the last while when I meet them at the coffee shop, the supermarket, at Shoppers Drug Mart or at church, who said, "You'd better watch what you're going to do." And I said, "What's that?" "Oh, well, you know, you will be deciding, you'll be talking, you'll be voting on the TTC and what the city of Toronto wants and stuff like that." I said, "Look, we'll take it into consideration. It hasn't come to the House. We'll certainly be debating it. Hopefully, it will be sent to committee, where everyone will have an opportunity to have some input, and then we'll take it from there." "No, no, no. I'm living up here. Can you imagine if I had to go downtown, which I normally do, and my kids go to school to St. Michael's—imagine what would happen." We have to be very much aware of the concerns of the people as well. At the same

time, I have to say that I love the workers. All municipal employees do a hell of a good job.

We have a request here by the city of Toronto. As I was ending my comments to the comments of the member from Welland, I wondered what the debate would be like in this House if we had received a request from the city of Toronto and Mr. McGuinty and his government had said, "No, we're not going to deal with it." I wonder what the debate would be like in this House. I'll speak on it later on.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I was listening carefully to the member from Etobicoke North. It's sort of like a recurring dream: Every time the Liberals stand up to speak, they say the same thing. It's because it's carefully scripted. They don't want to take any blame or any fault for doing certain actions that might not be popular. It's sort of like Premier Dad has spoken, and it's not going to be anything more than Rob Ford's fault. That's the way I hear it.

Are they the government or not? Are our hydro bills too high because of Rob Ford? The point is that their government, and even the members over there now, chatting away, can't make up their minds on anything. In fact, respectfully, the Premier has lost his way on this and many issues.

The member who spoke earlier today, I think, spoke honestly and compassionately—the member from Welland. There's no one more compassionate in this House with respect to this issue. The member, Paul Miller—I should get his riding name here; I know him as Paul—Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, he spoke with honesty and openness. This is what should happen in this Legislature instead of these carefully crafted speeches that are deceptive. Is that permissible? They're words that make you think it's not their fault. But they're either the government or they're not. I think the people of Ontario are waiting for that kind of response.

Now, I can only say this: There's one member over there who I think has been thinking about a lot of things ever since he left cabinet—Mr. Caplan, from Don Valley West. He had a private member's bill that would have—

**Mr. David Caplan:** East.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** East. Don Valley East.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** East; pardon me. I should have looked more closely here. Don Valley East. In fairness, he speaks up.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Etobicoke North has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** First of all, this is an important issue that deserves more than just theatrics or excessively long history lessons.

Of course, I thank, on behalf of this chamber and with reference to this bill, the MPPs from Halton, Welland, York West and Durham.

**1500**

We certainly welcome the support of our Conservative colleague the MPP from Halton. I would respectfully ask

him to perhaps confer with his near seatmate in order to at least synchronize their messaging and perhaps have a unified voice of support from the Conservative Party.

Again, I respect the MPP from Welland for his heartfelt and very long devotion and knowledge within the subject of labour relations. But I think, ultimately, we're looking at answering the question that was posed by the MPP from Durham: Are we a government? Yes. In acknowledgment of that answer, we are stewards of the greater public good. I say that not only to you, Speaker, but to my honourable opponent from Welland and also to the many men and women who are here from the TTC itself.

As stewards of the greater public good, knowing about the extraordinary economic impact—numbers have been quoted; the extraordinary ridership; the idea of it being the third largest transport system; and perhaps more importantly, that your collective bargaining agreements expire on March 31, 2011. An attempt was made by ministry officials, by the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 113, by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, Lodge 235, and the relevant workers from CUPE, on February 10, 2011—not too long ago—and an impasse was reached. That only heightened the urgency with which we in the government, as stewards of the greater public good, need to move forward with this particular legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm going to get a drink of water because my throat—I'm getting choked up here.

**Interjection:** It's emotional.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's an emotional thing. I understand. I quite respectfully mean that, having worked in an industrial environment for 30-plus years. A portion of that was in labour relations, and a portion of that, certainly, was trying to resolve disputes.

I should sort of frame this whole debate about essential services. I wanted to make sure that I read things correctly here, so I went to the Hansard when Bill 150 was introduced. That's the official transcript or record of what the government is attempting to do.

More importantly, I have before me a copy of Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission. It's important to start with that. Mr. Sousa, the new Minister of Labour—I want to put on the record, too, that I think it was premature for Mr. Fonseca to leave.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could you refer to the member's riding rather than by name?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes; pardon me. He's not a minister, so now I have to call him—he's from Mississauga East—Cooksville.

He did serve in a pretty interesting time, but as soon as the water got hot, he jumped out. In fact he is going to run federally, it's my understanding. I wish him some luck but not as much as he'll need.

The point here really is that Mr. Sousa's bill was probably started right after Rob Ford was elected.

"The bill addresses potential labour disputes between the Toronto Transit Commission and bargaining agents representing employees of the Toronto Transit Commission under the Labour Relations Act, 1995: see sections 1 and 2.

"The bill prohibits strikes and lockouts and provides for arbitration as the mechanism for achieving a collective agreement when the parties are unable to negotiate an agreement: see sections 3 to 21.

"The bill also requires that a review of the act be initiated within one year following the fifth anniversary of the coming into force of the act...." In 5 years it will be reviewed. That's actually a reasonable provision.

In fact, if you look at the implications here, sort of setting the framework—Mr. Sousa, the Minister of Labour, said right at the opening, "It's a privilege to rise to speak to Bill 150, the Toronto Transit Commission Labour Disputes Resolution Act.

"The legislation we are considering today follows a request by Toronto city council that the TTC be made an essential service."

I'm wondering—they're so agreeable on this—about the number of requests that I've had from my riding. Why don't they roll back some of this HST? I'm hearing that regularly. Why don't they roll back—they're hearing it widely, Madam Speaker; you know that. In fact, one of the bills that they passed just before Christmas was to give back some of the increase in energy costs, for a while—probably till just after the election—and they'll roll it back in again. That's the kind of thing where you have to have certainty and confidence when you're dealing with the government.

They've set up a review, which is five years, which will get them through one election term without having to deal with it again. The question then remains, is this only the TTC? That's grossly unfair.

**Interjection.**

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Mr. Caplan is way ahead; he should have replaced Mr. Fonseca.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could you refer to the riding?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Pardon me, Don Valley East. I'm so used to calling him "Minister," and his mother before him, that I'm surprised that he's not there.

The point I'm trying to make is that he said in a bill back in 2010—this is interesting. I believe I'm correct—I could be mistaken—Ms. Wynne, who is the Minister of Transportation, didn't support him. That's my understanding. There's the conundrum. There's the very essence of why this is so confusing for us: It comes down to trust. Can you trust what they say?

**Interjections.**

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm hearing people say no. Look, I'll let them speak in their two-minute rebuttals. I'm trying to get to the point of our position here, and I will. I want everyone to stick around. I have 15 minutes left, and I'm going to tell you in the last two minutes what I think is a reasonable position.

I think my good friend the member from Halton had it right: There should definitely be hearings on this. We have with us today members of the TTC union, and they are concerned. It's their future. Now, I will say that any time when I was on council—not in Toronto but in Durham—these arbitrated solutions tend to be a bit risky. Quite honestly, they often go to—you might like this part—an increased settlement. But what then happens, if you look at transit across—why are the Durham transit people making less? What about the benefits? You get into the one big union situation or the ratcheting effect of one negotiation versus another, ratcheting the various incremental costs.

I look back to history to anticipate the future. I don't want to upset the member from Hamilton Mountain or—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Depends on what you say.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no, I'll try not to—and the member from Welland, certainly. Here's the deal: I was on council, in fact, I was chair of budget, at the time when Bob Rae was government. They were going into the ditch rapidly. The budget was about \$48 billion a year, and the deficit was \$12 billion. They tried to implement a few things. One was called the expenditure reduction plan. It's funny how history repeats itself. I met with Floyd Laughren—not me personally—along with other mayors and people like that and people who were in the budget process, and Mr. Rae as well. Yes, it was Bob Rae—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** He's a Liberal.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** He's with Ignatieff now. Sometimes it's hard to keep track of them.

The fact is, at that time, they were trying to get municipalities and regions to work co-operatively with them, and it wasn't going to fly. This dog would not hunt, for sure.

So they had to implement the—let me hear it now—social contract. Paul Miller wasn't here at the time, nor were you, Madam Speaker, but respectfully, I'm sure—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Riding names.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** There were people who were—in fact, the whole party was quite upset about opening all these contracts. I'd reflect on it. Back then, their budget was about \$48 billion, and the deficit was \$12 billion. Today, the budget is about \$115 billion, and the deficit is about \$20 billion; if you count the WSIB debt, it's about \$30 billion. So the deficit is still about 25% of the total budget. That's money they don't have.

Now when you look at municipal budgets—the city of Toronto—a municipal budget is 78% payroll. Some people say it's more, about 80% payroll. So when you have these tight times, and you have these things defined as essential services—that would be police, fire, ambulance. Now for municipal workers, your whole budget, basically, is there. Policing is a huge part of the budget.

1510

And now you're going to make the TTC—we know that transit across the world is heavily subsidized. I don't know what the revenue from the fare box is, but it's

probably in the order of 30%. I'd like to see the audited numbers. Anyway, it's heavily subsidized, and some people could respond to that. I know in the way the gas money flows now, provincially, it's all based on how many miles we travel. It's not how many passengers, it's by how many miles you travel. But what does this have to do with it? Transit is critical. This morning coming in from Durham region, I listened to the radio early, and there was an accident which stopped the eastbound train from Union, and so I immediately kept driving. I take the GO Train frequently and I take the TTC frequently too. I have my tokens with me all the time. In fact, if I go down to the ROMA-Good Roads meeting I'll take the subway, not some posh taxi or ministerial car—with the people, on the subway.

It is essential. Let's cut to the chase. In my view, once you give up the car, everybody here knows transit is number one. So, respectfully, you provide an essential service, right alongside things like police and fire. It's tough, but the solution is a mediated solution; quite frequently, the settlements are higher.

Is it fair? This is why on our side we've been calling—my good friend from Halton said we've been calling for public hearings. Let's let the members of the TTC organization speak up. Let them be heard. Let Premier McGuinty face them and explain this intervention into their traditional relationship with their employer, the city of Toronto.

On the one hand they're always just railing against the new mayor of Toronto, despicably railing, criticizing, slashing at him, and then on the other hand they're sucking up to him. They're saying, "What a great guy Rob is. We're just going to go along with him without any pushback." You can't have it both ways. This is the real point. I would say that you want to talk and you want to listen to the record here.

The legislation is, as our leader Tim Hudak has said to us and our critic has said, in Hansard—I have it in front of me here—the request of Mayor Ford and a vote of the council to make the TTC—Mayor Ford was given an enormous mandate during the election from the city of Toronto. This was a plank in his platform, so obviously he's concerned with the people of Toronto. There have been a few occasions where it's been very unhelpful. The PC caucus, I should say, supported Mr. Caplan's bill, Bill 150, a private member's bill on essential services. We support Mr. Ford's efforts to respect the taxpayers of Toronto by ensuring that the TTC operates fiscally responsibly, with stability and in the best interest of Ontarians—more importantly, the city of Toronto.

Here's what's going to happen. I see it rolling out pretty much as the member from Don Valley East forecast—very intuitive. It's hard to say complimentary things of a person on the other side, but you've got to recognize that he gets it. Where does Premier McGuinty stand in this? That's where the ambivalence comes up. It's half a loaf here. The bill here will allow an arbitrator to be appointed by the minister. If the conciliation officer is unable to reach a collective agreement, the minister

will have final say over who the arbitrator is, and it is not subject to judicial review. If the two parties could reach an agreement on an arbitrator themselves, they're allowed to select the method of arbitration. If they are unable to do so, mediation and arbitration will automatically be selected. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement on the method of arbitration, the minister will once again select mediation unless the minister believes there is a more appropriate method.

So it leaves all the options to the government, and I hope that includes sitting down with the union leadership, as I think responsible organizations do. The arbitration will take into account criteria that include the employer's ability to pay—very critical. This has been an old issue for years. Arbitrated settlements over the past—and the member from Ottawa—Orléans would know; he was at one time a councillor in Ottawa, so he knows. They've always come in much higher. The peer groups, the reference groups—usually, you end up paying more. That will automatically happen. The arbitration will take into account criteria that include the employer's ability to pay in light of its fiscal situation, the economic situation in Ontario and the city of Toronto, comparisons between public and private sector employees' terms and conditions of employment, and the extent to which services may have to be reduced in light of the decision if current funding and taxation levels are not increased. It must be noted that the ability-to-pay criteria set by this bill are lacking in detail and as such would be interpreted as a weakened criteria by an arbitrator. That's very important.

The Toronto Transit Commission is not considered an essential service, and thus, the Labour Relations Act, 1995, permits the employees to go on strike and the employer to lock out employees in the case of labour disputes. The unionized TTC employees have used strike action nine times, most recently in 2008, when it was put forward that the strike was costing upwards of—listen up—\$50 million a day to the city of Toronto.

Toronto's very dependent—essentially dependent, you might say—on having an effective and operating transit system.

Mayor Ford was elected in the 2010 municipal election with the largest mandate ever. One of his core—I would love to have been there that night to see George Smitherman. He was so arrogant when he was here; he could do no wrong. Well, he's in the penalty box now. I just had to stick that in there.

The unionized TTC employees have the right to strike, and it's an essential service. Given Mr. Ford's enormous victory, it is clear that the essential-service designation is a priority for families of Toronto.

In 2010, David Caplan—I said that before.

The mayor is pushing quite publicly his urge to have this legislation pushed through before March 31, when the TTC labour contract is set to expire. There's the rub right there. I'm saying that this thing is going to get lost in all of the rolling of the dice around here because there's very little legislation on the order paper.

I see Mr. Murdoch has joined us. Come on in, Bill. You can do a two-minute—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Please mention the riding, not the name.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I can only say this: These time-tables and these dates that are set in here—I put on the table here that there will be a budget in March. There's a couple of bills; this is one of them. Our position here would probably be to have this time-allocated. Call them in for a recorded vote. We're not going to let them sneak out from under the radar and blame Rob Ford. They're the government, they're doing the decision and they're in charge. If people don't like it, they should give them an X beside their name. That is a not, I mean; insert the word "not" in there.

I listened to Tim Hudak, and he thinks that people should be—first, he always talks about fairness for the family. He starts almost every one of his concerns about his family, your family, my family, the families. Fairness comes into it, and this is very important in these times when the economy isn't as strong as one would like it. In the last 10 years, the economy has been fairly respectable. Maybe the last two years out of that it has kind of gone in the ditch a bit, mostly under Premier McGuinty.

I don't blame it all on him, but do you know how he solved every problem? He raised taxes—eco tax, electricity. All he has done is raise taxes and spending. He has increased spending by 70%, and you should ask yourself: Are you any better off? The children's aids are in trouble. Early learning is in trouble. Special needs children are in trouble. The courts are in trouble. The whole thing is going into the ditch. I cannot believe that the people aren't—just look at your energy bill. It is frightening to think what's happening in Ontario. Property taxes—the same thing. I don't know where it's going to end.

I think of my family—we have five children—and I hope that they have a future. I hope that the future is bright for them.

1520

When I get back to the essential nature of this, I think it's a solution where it is an important service. I use it. I recognize it. Regular families and transit are a big deal. We spent, on a private member's bill last week—I have to put this on. Metrolinx wants an additional \$5 billion a year for the next five years and beyond, and we already have a deficit of about \$20 billion. They want \$5 billion a year. They're spending money like drunken sailors. The idea of buying all the electrification of the rail to the airport thing is another scandalous event.

I say to this: The workers should be listened to. There should be public hearings. We should always keep in focus what it means to families, especially to families of modest means. They need transit to get to their job, whether it's part-time or not. That's what Tim Hudak said to us. It's an essential service, by its definition.

I want to be on the record as making sure that the front-line people are treated fairly and that there's no irresponsible management intervention in how it oper-

ates. These are important functions. Look at how we treat our firemen and police with the statues over here, with the memorials that we have.

It's not something that would be pleasantly received here. I know that. The NDP are honest about it, but who is not being honest with the workers at TTC is the McGuinty side.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask you to withdraw that comment.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, it's unpleasant. I withdraw that part. But I'm just saying: I hope that, once and for all, they be straightforward. Mr. Kormos spoke passionately, as did Mr. Miller. I want to see someone over there—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask you to refer to the riding—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** —not always sticking to the script. Tell the facts.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I just want to bring forward the point that they've been out "exactly 11 days ... in 20 years" of service being disrupted in the city of Toronto by the transit workers—11 days in 20 years. Not too big, is it?

"Declaring the TTC an essential service by law will do three things.

"Yes, it will ban strikes; that's clearly number one" for the government. "That doesn't mean they couldn't have an illegal strike. We've had those before, but it's unlikely. We will have work-to-rule campaigns instead of strikes; they could still happen." These are quotes from the former leader of the Conservatives, John Tory, on his show. He predicts that they will happen more often—work to rule—and the people won't like that.

Second, "The essential service declaration will render largely meaningless any negotiations between unions and management when it comes to the TTC, negotiations which, let's face it, have been successful most times in the past decade. That's why we only had 11 days lost to strike in total. Issues that go far beyond wages will fester in the absence of negotiations and not get addressed." This is coming from John Tory.

Third, and most important, "The key expensive issues—wages and benefits and things that really cost all the money—will be decided upon now by an arbitrator, someone who, in my view, could care less about the interests of subway riders or taxpayers, someone who, as of history—I don't mean a particular person, but I mean arbitrators generally have shown themselves quite willing to capitulate to the union position nine out of 10 times. That will cost millions—\$23 million is one estimate, which means big fare increases and big tax increases for the people of Toronto, or both. I hope that when you're thinking about removing the risk of 11 days over the period of many years it's worth those big fare increases or tax increases, or both—and the inevitable work-to-rule campaign." My guess is, you're going to forget about this

legislation real quickly and not like what this government is doing.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** At the outset, again on what is a very important and serious issue going forward for the city and the people of Toronto and ultimately for us as stewards of the public good, the first thing I would say is that this is not about an attack on the unions or working men and women. This is about listening responsively to the city of Toronto, to the duly elected people and officials. This is about moving Ontario forward in order to declare what is, after all, an essential service in terms of the economic, money and social impact that we've talked about.

I would also say that, listening to some of the individuals within this particular chamber, there's a bit of a disconnect. My honourable opponent from Durham: Although I share and honour your respect for working people and the collective bargaining process, it seems to be somewhat lately found. I was very amused to hear my opponent from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek complaining, I think using John Tory, saying that arbitration leads to bigger increases for workers. If that's true, what I would simply suggest to you is, why would you not then support it, if it does actually, as you quoted in this chamber—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** You say you're sticking up for the taxpayers. You're not sticking up for the taxpayers; you just want to get re-elected.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to come to order. Thank you.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Sir, I appreciate the passion with which you speak, but I respectfully listened to you. I would ask you to do the same, if it is possible.

I think as well that to disparage arbitrators as a group, as a case, as a class, as an entire profession is really not appropriate for this chamber. Arbitrators are agreed to by all individuals involved, whether it's CUPE here, the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 113, or the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, Lodge 235.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** As you can see, this gets to be a very passionate subject, and of course it's even more passionate as the government members try to slide out from under the responsibility of this particular bill, in that they're just passing on the wishes of the city of Toronto and taking as little responsibility for it as possible.

I mentioned earlier that I did have some concerns with the bill regarding the types of arbitration and mediation that the bill proposes. I'm a strong proponent of the final-offer-selection type of arbitration. I think that it tends to bring the two sides together as much as possible in a situation that is not to either side's liking. With the final-offer-selection process, of course, you can't risk a large loss; therefore, it tends to move you toward the centre,

which is after all what the negotiation process is all about.

I would encourage the government to look at that. I'm sure there will be presentations on all sides when the bill goes to hearings, and people will make their thoughts known. But certainly, I think it has proven in the past that it does bring sides together and it does, when there is strike legislation available to them, tend to make those strikes less onerous when the final offer selection system has been used.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Just to be very clear at the outset, I oppose this bill, as do all my colleagues in the NDP caucus.

This bill is bad for the public because of the imposition of arbitration. We all are well aware that this is going to be more costly for the public at the same time as it rolls back the rights of working people who, over the last century and longer in Canada, have sacrificed a great deal to protect their rights to assemble and to withdraw their labour, if need be, to force a reasonable agreement with an employer.

We all know that people who work on the transit system are at times subject to or at risk of assault in isolated buses late at night. We know that people who drive those subway trains have seen people leap to their deaths in front of them and have suffered psychological damage because of that. We know that this is a workforce that, on a daily basis, holds the lives and well-being of hundreds of thousands of people in its hands. If you don't drive well, if you don't pay attention to the road, if you make a mistake, it can be very expensive in terms of human life. So when we deal with a workforce that is in a critical position, we have to ask, "How do we ensure that we have a good working relationship? How do we ensure that we have a good transit system?"

Madam Speaker, as you are well aware, fundamental problems with this transit system go back to its underfunding. When a system is underfunded and stressed, it causes conflict between all of those who are involved in it.

This bill will not address the root problems that we face with the Toronto Transit Commission and with other transit commissions in this province. This bill will not help public transit. This bill will damage it.

1530

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Durham has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Is it only two minutes? I thought I had another half an hour. I'll have to hurry up here.

The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek talked about work to rule and how that will still be their way of exercising their voice; I understand that.

The member from Etobicoke North actually congratulated me—thank you very much—that I have compassion. I would say it's arrogant to think that everyone here doesn't. I really think that's one way to look at things.

I thought that the member from Halton made a very intuitive remark on final offer selection. Most of my undergraduate degree was in labour—it was in economics, but economics and labour. This was one of the options that's rarely used, actually. I think it is something where both parties have to put a reasonable, realistic offer on the table, and that should be part of it.

I think public hearings are important, but the member from Toronto—Danforth spoke with openness and compassion about their plight. I have constituents in my riding of Durham that work for the TTC. I'm quite aware of it. I know there have been many cases where they need someone to act on their behalf, whether it's a WSIB issue or whatever, and I think any reasonable member would listen and, I would say, arbitrate or work on their behalf.

That's not exactly what this is about. This is strictly about removing one of their rights today. Who's initiating it? It's Premier McGuinty. Let's not be ambivalent about it. Let him take the heat. Is it the right thing or the wrong thing? All the public sector are out there waiting. They need these services in the public. We're seeing what's going on in various jurisdictions. This is very important. Let's not take the foot off Premier McGuinty's foot—or whatever.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you.

Further debate?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'll be sharing my time this afternoon with the member for Beaches—East York.

I do want to say first and foremost, off the top, that as my critic, the member for Welland, indicated in his remarks, New Democrats do not support this legislation. We think the government is doing the wrong thing by removing a fundamental right from the women and men of this city who provide transit services to the people of Toronto. We think that the government has taken the wrong track—no pun intended—on this legislation, and we will vigorously speak against it, as we believe that the government has lost its way in regard to what it once bragged about as having respect for workers in this province.

It is very apparent that this government has no respect for workers in this province, because they are quite happy and willing to come to the table with a piece of legislation that removes one of their fundamental rights, and that is the right to strike.

Why is that a fundamental right? Why do we call it a fundamental right in this province? It goes back to a particular decision that was made, a decision that was made in regard to showing that the right to bargain collectively, to affect the working conditions in the place that you work, is actually a human right because of the amount of time that we all spend at work. We spend a lot of time at work, so the ability to have some impact, some effect, on the rules of that workplace, on how that workday proceeds, is something that is fundamentally a human right that people should have in their possession.

The landmark ruling came in 2007 on June 8, when the Supreme Court of Canada actually confirmed that

collective bargaining is protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I'm going to quote exactly what they said: "The right to bargain collectively with an employer enhances human dignity"—something the government wants to take away. They didn't say that; that's an aside from me—"liberty and the autonomy of workers by giving them opportunity to influence the establishment of workplace rules and thereby gain some control over a major aspect of their lives, namely their work."

It is obvious that this government does not have that fundamental respect for the dignity of workers. This bill says it more clearly than anything else. They may have spent the last couple of years wooing the workers of Ontario and trying to pretend that the Liberal McGuinty government is somehow the best friend of the working woman and man in this province, but this bill lays it all to rest. The evidence is clear: The McGuinty Liberal government has no interest in the interests of workers.

New Democrats proudly are opposed to this bill. We think it is the wrong thing to do, yes, because it takes away the fundamental rights of workers, but also, as has been mentioned already, it will force up the costs for the operating of the TTC. Whether you believe it or not, the evidence is clear and documented that arbitrated settlements end up being more costly; they just do.

We already have a system that is underfunded. We already have a system that no longer enjoys 50% funding for operating from the provincial government. That used to be the case. The provincial government used to actually fund 50% of the operating costs of Toronto transit. That's no longer the case. We have a system that's in crisis. We have a system where the fares are the highest in North America. We have a system that is not able to expand and provide as many services as are demanded by the people of this community, of the city of Toronto. Yet we have a piece of legislation here that is just going to drive those costs up more. What's that going to mean? That's going to mean either further reductions in service or it's going to mean increases in fares, because those are the only places that the municipal government, the city of Toronto, is going to be able to get the money from. It makes no sense whatsoever on a financial analysis that this is going to be the case.

What's going to happen then? The system is going to become even more expensive for the people who need it the most, the people who need to get back and forth to work every day, the people who need to move around the vastness of this huge city. It's very, very clear that not only does this take away workers' rights, but it does so in a very costly way to the city of Toronto.

I think the other reality is that this move is not going to prevent the workers of the Toronto Transit Commission from taking other job actions—and you can't blame them. What this basically does is set up a big fail for everybody, because the workers are going to have a contract forced upon them that they didn't freely negotiate. There's going to be some resentment, I would think, and I would suspect that they are going to find other ways to try to get some control over their work-

place, over the place where they spend a great majority of their time. I would suggest that, in fact, this is not going to be a successful move if the point is to create a sense of assurance around delivery of service. I wouldn't blame them one bit.

I think it is absolutely unacceptable that the workers of the Toronto Transit Commission are going to be forced into a situation where they have to abide by a collective agreement that they did not freely negotiate. It sets up a very, very bad scenario in terms of everyday relations in that workplace, and I suspect it's not going to be very pleasant for a very long time at the Toronto Transit Commission. I don't think it's going to prevent what the government is hoping it will prevent in terms of possible work actions.

Finally, the other thing, I think, is that it shows that this government really has no values when it comes to protection of workers' rights in this province. The question, then, is an open-ended one: Who's next? There are members of other public sector unions who are here today, and everybody is wondering: If the McGuinty Liberal government is prepared to take away the right to strike from Toronto Transit Commission workers, then who is next in line? What other set of workers is going to lose that fundamental right? What does it say about a government that's prepared not only to take that right to strike away from this group of workers but to create that pall, that sense, that worry, that concern across all workers in this province that at any moment their government can, in such a disrespectful way, in such a callous way, remove one of their very fundamental rights, one of their rights that is protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It says a lot about the expediency of this government in terms of its willingness to simply cut the union off at its knees and allow for the removal of the one tool they have to get a fair shake in the workplace.

1540

I have to say that I think the government has miscalculated this in a very major way. I think that what is going to end up happening when this legislation is passed—of course, the government has a majority here and they're going to have their way no matter what. But I think what's going to come back to haunt governments of Ontario in the future is that they're going to end up having to pay the freight in terms of the spiralling cost of the TTC system.

I think the government will realize at the end of the day, and it will be far too late, that it wasn't worth it to take away the fundamental rights of these workers, to create, really, a black eye on this government and a negative sense of labour relations in this province for the expediency of this situation. Why? Because we know that in this particular collective agreement, there was already a salvo given by the union. The union said, "We will not strike. We will not strike during this round of negotiations. We'll hold off on that action. We understand that there is a great deal of concern and anxiety here, so we're not going to do that. We're going to guarantee that we

are going to work through the negotiating process and get to a negotiated collective agreement.”

I’m not necessarily pointing the finger at the mayor of Toronto; he’s got to do what he’s got to do. I don’t support his position by any stretch. But it’s this government that has decided to take away the right to strike of workers. It wasn’t the city of Toronto. They don’t have the ability to do that. It’s this government that’s doing that. They can try to pretend that it’s all the mayor of Toronto’s dirty work, but in fact the blood is on their hands. The blood is on their hands.

New Democrats will speak against this every chance we get. We’re looking forward to the committee process, where stakeholders can come to the table and have a word about what this means for the broader labour relations picture in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It’s with a very heavy heart that I rise here today. I think back to my own history. Some 38 years ago this very week, I joined as a fledging immigration officer at Pearson International Airport. I went there to a place that I knew was unionized. There was a union right there in the workplace, and I discovered, to my chagrin, in that very first week that we did not have a contract. In fact, the contract had expired, but it had gone to binding arbitration. It went to binding arbitration because, back in February 1973, although we were unionized, the government of Canada, in its wisdom, had determined that we were an essential service because we were at the port of entry. Because we were officers, as they liked to call us, we did not have the right to strike.

What did the officers do at Pearson airport when I first arrived there? They worked to rule. What else could they do? They couldn’t go out on strike. They couldn’t do anything except perhaps tie up the lines a little bit: write longer reports, check things in the manual, do all the things that workers who have no rights are forced to do.

It took a few years, but an enlightened Liberal government in Ottawa changed the rules. They took us out of binding arbitration and put us into conciliation with the right to strike. Now isn’t that a switch? This is an enlightened Liberal government saying that we should have had the right to strike, and they gave us that right. And in all the time I worked there, more than 20 years, we went on strike once. We got legislated back, but I’ll tell you, the arbitration wasn’t a problem for us in terms of the amount of money we made. The arbiter always gave us about what we thought we could get if we were on the conciliation route. And when we were on the conciliation route, there was always the odd gripe that we might have done better had we stayed in arbitration.

That is not the issue.

The issue for me, the issue for all of the people with whom I worked all those years, is that we had the right to conciliation and strike on a whole broad range of topics that the arbitrator traditionally would not look at. We had the opportunity to look at things like contract language. We had the opportunity to look at workers’ rights. We

had the opportunity, and it was a big one and an important one, for health and safety legislation, for health and safety in the workplace, and to ensure that immigration officers, who worked sometimes in horrendous conditions, not just at the airport, not just at the port of entry but on the streets of Toronto, where they often faced attack and potential death, had the right to full collective bargaining, which protected them in the long term.

That was the most important thing we had. It wasn’t the few bucks extra we were going to get from some kind of collective agreement imposed on us by an arbitrator. It was the right to withdraw our labour unless our health and safety was looked after and unless we had the legislation that went with it. That was the important thing.

I am sure the TTC workers in this city will take whatever money they get from an arbitrator or that they got from conciliation. But that, to them, is not the real issue. That ought not to be the real issue while you take away their rights. The real issue is that they have to be able to control their work environment; they have to be able to control the health and safety of their members.

I looked at this government, I read this legislation, and I felt like crying. I listened today to what some of the members had to say. They’re doing this because the mayor of Toronto, Rob Ford, asked them to do it.

Rob Ford in today’s newspaper is asking for \$150 million from this government. Are you going to do that because he’s asking for that too? I’m expecting the same argument from him, and I’m going to make the same argument on behalf of the people of Toronto if you ram this through. The mayor is asking you today for \$150 million. How many heads are nodding over there? How many people think that just because he’s asking for it, it’s a good thing? I’ll tell you, just because he’s asking for this doesn’t make it a good thing.

In other jurisdictions, people have rights. This government is hell-bent on taking them away. Surely it will cost more. People have said this. I don’t know if other people have referred to this, but I cut out a couple of articles in the last few days.

One was from the *Globe and Mail*, Adam Radwanski, who writes, “The fact that contract talks will almost automatically be sent to arbitration is good news for their members. And that’s not just because, as has been widely documented, the process usually awards generous wage settlements.

“Beyond adjusting pay, arbitrators don’t tend to significantly alter the status quo. So pensions and other benefits will remain intact, and there will be no major changes to pay structures aimed at improving efficiency (or customer service). In other words, TTC labour costs are guaranteed to continue going up, adding to the squeeze Mr. Ford will face as he attempts to cut revenue without significantly affecting services.”

Then I read the *National Post*, the same day, February 23, from Peter Kuitenbrouwer, who writes, “Although banning TTC strikes is an easy decision for Mr. McGuinty, the fallout for the city of Toronto will be more complicated, expensive, and potentially troublesome.

"TTC management, in 2008 and again in December, made it clear it does not support making the TTC an essential service. A study by the C.D. Howe Institute in 2008 estimated that making the TTC essential would cost the city about \$23 million more over a three-year contract."

This government needs to listen to the workers. They need to look at what is happening in other jurisdictions. We are asking for public hearings in committee on this bill. The government may choose, after having listened to TTC management, after having listened to the Amalgamated Transit Union and after having listened to the people of Toronto—who, after all, will be affected—to look at an alternative to what you're proposing here.

1550

Montreal clearly found a good alternative. Montreal allows for designations, the same designations we had in the immigration department after we got the right to strike. We didn't shut down ports of entry, but we did shut down processing of family-class applications. The same can happen here. In Montreal, they run the service in both the morning and afternoon rush hours and allow the workers the opportunity to strike in the other periods, to make sure that the city is not shut down; to make sure that business goes ahead. The transit union in Montreal seems to get along very well under those circumstances. Why not look at that as a possible example? Why not look at what is happening in other jurisdictions around the world, where workers do have that right but are willing to make accommodations?

I think that the workers here have been very accommodating. I watched as the Amalgamated Transit Union suggested that they are willing to forgo their right to strike in this round of bargaining in order to sit down and have a meaningful discussion with this government and with the city of Toronto, and that has all been ignored.

I don't know why this government is so hell-bent on proceeding so rapidly without looking at people's rights. There have to be alternatives. There can be designations. There can be morning and after-rush-hour rituals that are adhered to. They can find ways not to disrupt the service. If you don't, there will be working to rule; there will be. As sure as I'm standing here, there will be. But at the same time, something terrible will have been lost.

I received today a letter from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. I just got it as I was walking up the stairs. They closed their letter by stating:

"We cannot let the rights of workers be threatened because a mayor or a political party decides to ride out a troubled economy on the backs of working people. Working people did not cause the global recession; that was caused by the greed of a few. Undermining fundamental worker rights, rights enshrined in the ILO covenant signed by Canada, is not an appropriate response," and they urge me to defeat this bill.

That may be a long shot, but I ask the government to at least hear the workers out, to have committee hearings and to do the right thing, not the wrong thing, by the people of Toronto.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** In replying to the very legitimate concerns of some of my colleagues from the NDP—the member from Hamilton Centre as well as Beaches—East York—I would just simply offer a couple of remarks.

First of all, with reference to the Amalgamated Transit Union's offer of engaging in these particular negotiations and essentially agreeing not to strike, it is my understanding that the Ministry of Labour met with members of CUPE as well as the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 113, and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, Lodge 235, on February 10, 2011. An impasse emerged from those particular deliberations. As I mentioned earlier in my more substantive remarks, that is part of the reason why we are moving forward, as the collective agreements expire on March 31, 2011.

With due respect to the third party's long-standing view on labour relations, I would simply cite to them that it was, in fact, in 1993, under something called the social contract, which was probably the largest and most vilified abrogation of collective bargaining contracts in the history of the province of Ontario—\$2 billion in public sector wages were cut. Civil service wages were frozen. It was an effect on massive numbers of unionized workers, and it was enacted by precisely the party opposite. As Oscar Wilde said long ago, no man can escape his past. I would simply offer that to you in terms of a mirror effect in the middle of your espousing the rights of workers across Ontario.

Part of what was mentioned was labour relations. We have a massive record: 80% without arbitration in 10 years and 99% in the last year. I think it's a record that speaks for itself.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I have been listening very intently to the debate this afternoon on Bill 150, which of course would, if passed, declare the TTC as an essential service and would require that any disputes be settled by arbitration rather than by allowing strikes.

Many interesting points have been made this afternoon, but there are a couple that I would just like to make. One is the issue that the McGuinty Liberals are raising that they only are bringing this forward because Mayor Ford asked them to. Of course, Mayor Ford did campaign on the strength of that, and I applaud him for having the courage of his convictions and being true to his promise. But in return, I would expect that the Liberals would do the same thing. Either do it or don't do it, but at least have the courage of your convictions with respect to it. That's one point.

The second point is that this is a serious matter, and we are taking this seriously. It is a very serious matter to take away the rights of workers to settle their differences by way of withdrawing their work. It is a matter of balancing the rights of workers, on the one hand, and the interests of the public, on the other hand.

I would say that there are some significant concerns there. One concern is that a lot of workers do require the TTC to be operating in order to be able to get to their work. It's not just a question of lost productivity or loss of convenience: There are people who need to get to work in hospitals and other places where their services are essential.

Secondly, there are a lot of very vulnerable people who do depend on the TTC and associated services in order to get around. That's what really concerns me in all of this: that we have people who really do rely on this in order to get around and, frankly, in some cases, even to survive.

I do think that we should be taking this very seriously. I look forward to having this matter come into committee so that we can actually have a serious discussion about this and look at that balance and find out where we should end up with this.

I thank you for the opportunity to participate this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Recalling the history, indeed: Bob Rae the Liberal screwed over workers in 1993, and now it's Dalton McGuinty—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Excuse me. I'd ask you to withdraw that comment. Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, the workers got plucked back in 1993 by Bob Rae, the Liberal Premier of the day, and they're getting plucked again by Liberal Dalton McGuinty. So if there's consistency when it comes to who's plucking workers in this province, it's Liberals like Bob Rae and Dalton McGuinty.

I'm looking forward to hearing the comments by the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who's going to be up on this matter before the afternoon is over. I know he's a passionate advocate of working people, working women and men. I suspect his comments will be hard-hitting, sharp, biting and, indeed, to the point, and won't leave any room for misinterpretation.

I'm proud that Andrea Horwath, as leader of the New Democratic Party, has stated her position and the position of the NDP very, very clearly on this issue. That, again, is unequivocal: New Democrats oppose this legislation. We will not be supporting it. We will be voting against it. We will be using our power under the standing orders to force the bill to committee, unless, of course, the government invokes time allocation, and it has something of a pattern of doing that.

I say that it's the Liberals who should be explaining to working women and men in this province about the Liberal history when it comes to workers and workers' rights. It's those little workers, the women, the immigrant workers working at Walmart and places like that, who aren't entitled to card-based certification, or it's workers out on picket lines, locked out or otherwise, who see their jobs being taken every day by scabs because the Liberals insist on maintaining their repeal of the NDP anti-scab

legislation. Those are some interesting observations, aren't they?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I am pleased to rise today in the House to contribute to the debate on second reading of Bill 150, the Toronto Transit Commission Labour Disputes Resolution Act.

We introduced this legislation in response to a request from Toronto city council to declare the Toronto Transit Commission an essential service and refer all outstanding collective agreement matters to binding arbitration.

It's almost a *déjà vu* for me, because I was a member of a union organizing the hospital and health sector in the 1970s. Yes, at the time we had the right to strike, but it was quite difficult for all of us to abandon our patients and to go on strike.

1600

Soon after, the government of the day declared the hospital sector workers—the nurses—as an essential service. And do you know what? The leadership may not have shown great encouragement to that, but the membership did. They were very pleased, because we went and took our issues to an arbitrator and, at the time, we got a good collective agreement. We got a 35% increase in our raise, because we were very much underpaid at the time.

I want to say today that this decision will not be taken lightly. It's a very essential service for the 1.5 million Torontonians who need that service on a daily basis to go to work, to earn their living and to provide the good services that Torontonians need.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Beaches–East York has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I thank the members from Etobicoke North, Whitby–Oshawa, Welland and the Minister of Community and Social Services for what they had to say.

The member from Etobicoke North quoted Oscar Wilde. I'm always impressed. He uses quotes in this place from time to time. But you know, "escaping my past": When Bob Rae instituted the biggest assault on working people, as he puts it, in a generation, I wasn't here. I was a mayor. I was a mayor who had to sit down with the people and see the fallout of what happened. I learned first-hand the fallout of that draconian and terrible legislation.

So no, I'm not escaping my past. I'm telling you my past. It was the wrong thing to do then and it's the wrong thing to do now. If you are a mayor, as Mayor Ford finds himself today, he will find out in very short order that what he wishes for is not the right thing to do. And three and a half years from now, he will not be able to escape his past any more than the rest of us.

To the member from Whitby–Oshawa, I thank you for what you had to say, because we need a serious discussion. I haven't heard any promises that there's going to be a serious discussion around all of this. And I'm

living in some dread that, after six and a half hours, this government will stand up and invoke closure, and just cut off all debate and do whatever it wants. I suspect that's their game plan, because they would be very upset to hear from those who are opposed to this draconian legislation for the violation of the rights of workers under the ILO and everything else. I think they would be quite upset.

To the Minister of Community and Social Services, I think there are some workers who like arbitration, because they like the security of it. But believe you me, I don't believe that those workers work for the TTC or are members of the Amalgamated—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. David Caplan:** It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Don Valley East and speak to Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission.

Public transit, whether one is a transit user or not, is incredibly vital to the health, to the social and economic well-being of our city, indeed of our province. I am concerned, and I think we should all be concerned, as many Ontarians and many Torontonians are, about the reliability of our public transit services. Simply put, our cities cannot function properly without a fully operational public transit system. More than one and a half million Torontonians rely on the Toronto Transit Commission, the TTC, daily, to get to work, to school, to medical appointments—simply to live.

Toronto, in particular, our provincial capital, is not able to function without a working transit system. Toronto is the capital city of Ontario, the fifth most populous city in North America, the economic and financial capital of Canada, and the world's seventh-largest host city of headquarters. It headquarters the majority of Canadian major employers' corporations, and major educational and medical institutions.

Given the above unique factors of population, of size, of special area and vital economic function of our city, it becomes quite clear to me that a public transportation system in our city must be reliable and consistent.

I've been listening to the debate as it's been taking place here today, and I think that the opposition, particularly the third party, has mischaracterized this as somehow being anti-worker. I had the opportunity to meet with Amalgamated Transit Union president Bob Kinnear, who's here in the gallery today, just a few short weeks ago. I can tell you that, at that time, I had the opportunity to share with Mr. Kinnear and Gaetano—I'm sorry, I don't remember his last name—the view that I hold: that it is not because of workers, but rather because of management and workers who have not been able to come to a resolution of these matters very often in our lifetime. I'll go over the history of it, but the current system, as it stands today, is fundamentally flawed. Both sides know that the province will, within a 24-hour period of time, reconvene to end and send these matters to arbitration.

In fact, this has happened throughout our city's history. Various transportation service disputes have too often left our city paralyzed—and not just the city of Toronto. Ottawa saw a crippling nine-week transit strike quite recently, and I know many other cities have as well. Although public transit was identified by Metro Toronto's founders as one of the essential services, there have been too many instances where the TTC has failed to be just that.

The first of many strikes to come took place in 1952. It lasted 19 days. Another one followed in 1970 and lasted 12 days. The longest strike in the system's history took place in 1974, and that took 23 days. An eight-day-long strike occurred in 1978. In 1989, TTC workers staged a 41-day slowdown; although technically it was not a strike, it severely damaged the service provided and caused unbearable slowness and chaos within our city. The strike in 1991 lasted eight days, followed by a two-day strike in 1999. On May 29, 2006, a one-day wildcat strike took place—or, as I'm told, an incident took place after TTC employees suddenly walked off the job, causing severe disruption without notice on what was then an extremely hot and sweltering day.

The most recent disruption occurred after the TTC voted down a contract, and as of midnight on April 26, 2008, the Toronto Transit Commission was officially on strike. This move quickly shut down buses, streetcars and subways that carry over 1.5 million people across the city every day, every week. Our province convened over the weekend for an emergency session, having no real option but to act to send people back to work to avoid more hardship and disruption to our fellow citizens. In fact, the whole matter was sent to binding arbitration.

This is not unusual. It's a recurring and repeated pattern of a dysfunctional system which needs to have the proper tension put back into it.

It has become quite clear that any type of work stoppage or threat of work stoppage makes commuters second-guess whether they can trust transit to be there when they need it. In fact, the ridership numbers speak for themselves. After each and every one of these disruptions take place, ridership numbers plummet because the riders of transit no longer believe that it's reliable and that they can count on service being there. I'll get into some of the environmental and health-related challenges of more cars on our road.

In my opinion, we've had too many work stoppages over the course of recent years, and a majority of Toronto residents want to see legislation that would put an end to labour disruptions. Bill 150 would do just that.

I heard some of the earlier comments as members were speaking, whether in favour or against. Somebody said, "Well, you know, I'm on the side of workers"—and fair enough. Or "I'm on the side of management"—fair enough. I want to put it very straight and squarely on the record: I'm on the side of the people of the city of Toronto. I think that that's what the appropriate stance and view of members of this Legislature should be: to pick one side or another. To be responsive to the people

of the city of Toronto is, in fact, why I was sent to this Legislature and why I'll continue to speak on their behalf.

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Bill 150 designates the Toronto Transit Commission as an essential service. What it does, if enacted, is that it would essentially prohibit strikes by the union—by labour—and it would prohibit lockouts by management in connection with labour disputes between the Toronto Transit Commission and its employees. If both sides cannot reach a negotiated settlement, issues would be determined through a fair and neutral third party process called binding-interest arbitration.

It's interesting to note that there are other workers in our province who are deemed essential workers. They are able, with their employers, to come to a settlement of their issues at the bargaining table; most recently, firefighters did here in the city of Toronto. My wife is a nurse, and I can tell you that through the work of the Ontario Nurses' Association, they too have been able to come to an agreement with their employers at hospitals around the province. Simply because this designation is in place does not automatically mean, as some have led this Legislature to believe, that these matters will be sent to arbitration. In fact, it's only if both sides cannot come to an agreement at the bargaining table.

Some might argue that making transit an essential service and potentially having arbitrated settlements will cost the city more money. I don't buy that argument. In fact, even the most pessimistic predictions made by the C.D. Howe Institute foresee a potential cost of a measly half a cent per ride added to the cost of a TTC token—\$23 million over three years, half a cent per ride. I don't think that is, as some radio show host—Mr. Tory—would predict, a massive tax increase or a massive increase to the cost of a transit fare in the city of Toronto. It's half a cent per ride, just to put it into some perspective.

By the way, that doesn't take into account the \$4-million-per-day strike cost that the TTC faces when that occurs. That also doesn't take into account the \$50 million per day: Every 24 hours that there is a strike of the transit system within the city of Toronto, the economy of the city of Toronto suffers to the tune of \$50 million. I believe that most of the 1.5 million Torontonians who rely on the TTC every day would be willing to pay that extra cent per day when they ride the TTC if it would ensure that they had a reliable transit system.

Overall, in order for Toronto to function properly, the TTC needs to be declared an essential service. Like police, like fire, like some of the EMS, it's time to recognize that public transit systems like the TTC are vital to the social, economic and healthy reality of our city; to our environment; to workers; to the poor; to the disabled; to students; and to seniors, many of whom simply have no other means to get around.

There are several reasons or factors that I would note for a reliable transit service. Citizens need something that's reliable for many important reasons. The cost of

driving, when you figure in gas, parking and insurance, is prohibitive for many residents here in the city of Toronto. The age and diversity of our city's population: We have a significant number of children below the legal driving age and an equally significant number of seniors above the age of 75, meaning that a large proportion of the population can legally drive but does not.

Indeed, our road and parking infrastructure simply cannot handle increased use by more vehicle traffic. We need a transit system to be able to handle the population and employment growth that will make our city healthy and vital.

Overall, the average ridership of the TTC exceeds almost 2.5 million passengers: 1.2 million by bus, 328,000 by streetcar, 35,000 by intermediate rail and over 900,000 by subway.

Traffic congestion: Another reason that we need a healthy and vital transit system. The Toronto region is one of the top five most congested in North America. The cost of additional congestion due to strikes is usually in the millions, as I said earlier. According to a survey done by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, road congestion in the Toronto region costs us all approximately \$2 billion in lost time and productivity.

Toronto road infrastructure has been developed as a system that accommodates both public and private transportation, not for primary use by private transportation. The roads, as well as parking facilities, cannot handle a period of usage that functions without the public transit system, and we all know that the public transit system affects the economy, our environment and the health of our residents.

Gridlock caused by transit strikes paralyzes the city. It causes many detrimental effects on our local economy, our environment and the health and well-being of our residents.

I touched briefly on the economic loss. The TTC is one of the most important economic drivers of our city. The men and women who work for the TTC are some of the most important people in our city to be able to help us to be prosperous, vital and socially coherent. They are essential to our well-being. The economic loss to the city of Toronto due to a day of strike, estimated by the city manager, is \$50 million per day. It's equivalent to about 10% of the city's daily economic activity. That comprises loss of business due to employee absence or lost customers, loss of wages for individuals—and the member from Whitby-Oshawa touched on this—who could not get to work and whose employers would not be expected to pay for their absences, and loss of service to taxpayers who, during a strike, cannot access government services, health care, education and the like for which they have paid.

The environmental effects: During a public transit strike, the environmental damage from an increase in motor vehicle use and pollution, along with the accompanying traffic congestion, can be calculated in the tens of millions. Our public transit system contributes to cleaner air, cleaner water, less non-renewable fuel use

and less vehicle waste. It helps preserve our green spaces from highway construction; reduces traffic noise; helps keep our trees, plants and forests green; and helps sustain our water systems.

We know that there are health and medical costs as well because the decrease in air quality from additional vehicle use during transit strikes affects the health of our population, leading to a rise in health problems that individuals see.

The additional vehicles on the road due to transit strikes cause extra congestion, frustration and stress, which cause mental and emotional distress and eventually lead to job loss, indeed to disability. The ripple effects are incalculable and can be prevented by making our transit system more reliable and essential.

To understand how important and vital our city's public transit system is, and to sum up the effects of a TTC strike on our city, I'd like to point to some facts of a report done by one of Ontario's most prominent environmentalists, Marilyn Churley, in her work, *What If the TTC Just Disappeared?* According to Churley, the loss of the TTC would mean more than \$6.2 billion in lost economic benefit, \$23 million in environmental and energy costs, \$309 million in additional medical expenses, \$3.5 billion in additional travel time costs, \$1.5 billion in new vehicle operating and ownership costs, and \$195 million in long-term highway and parking construction costs—a total of about \$12 billion or over \$1 million per TTC worker annually.

Thus, it becomes clear—at least to me—that making the TTC an essential service is essential and unavoidable. If Toronto is to continue to work and expand in the future, we require a transit system that is reliable, but beyond those economic and environmental losses, one cannot forget that, most importantly, the TTC is a vital mode of transportation for those everyday Torontonians and Ontarians, for seniors, for the disabled, for students and for people of low income, whether they're headed to the doctor's office, to school, to local community centres or to work, and for this reason, declaring the TTC as an essential service is only the next logical step.

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In conclusion, based on the facts that the TTC is a public and not a private institution, paid for by the riders and by taxpayers who are therefore its owners and users, that the TTC operates the main transportation system in Toronto, Canada's key economic and most populated city and the fourth most heavily used transportation system for all of North America, and that Toronto's road infrastructure is set up for both private and public use, it's time to pass this legislation designating the TTC an essential service, prohibiting its workers from striking and prohibiting management from walking out.

I know that in the last round, about three years ago, I heard from many Don Valley East residents who were fed up and were stranded following that abrupt work stoppage. Poll after poll of city residents reveals that declaring public transit an essential service is something that the vast majority of Torontonians would like to see,

and based on the feedback that I've heard over the course of the last year, I can certainly attest to that. At the end of the day, Torontonians just want buses, trains and streetcars to be there when they need them.

It was aforementioned that there's a tremendous economic and social cost to our city every time a public transit strike occurs, including lost business, lost wages, lost service, lost time, traffic congestion and environmental damage. But above all of these economic and social effects, many of the benefits of declaring the TTC as an essential service are priceless: better trust in a public transit system by its citizens, which leads to better health, less stress, a longer life, stronger communities, a stronger city, and indeed a stronger province. This step is a necessary one.

We're living in a city that continues to add high-rise buildings and new businesses and residents each and every single day. In order to keep up, we need to improve and expand our public transit service to avoid congestion and gridlock. The TTC moves 1.5 million people per day. For many of these riders, the TTC isn't the better way; it's the only way. Enough is enough. Citizens all over this city have come to this point. It's time to regain their trust. Making public transit an essential service will do just that.

I hope that all members of the Legislature will support Bill 150. I look forward to and hope that there is an opportunity for members outside to comment on the effect of this legislation. Ultimately, I hope that Bill 150 passes and is in place to the benefit of the people of the city of Toronto and the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Don Valley East was being as straightforward as you can, and he's at least coming forward and not blaming it all on Rob Ford. It's unique in the fact that they've been trying to hide the whole thing as if it's sort of Rob Ford's fault, that this is just a one-time, one-off kind of thing.

It's actually a sign of the times. They would say and do anything to get elected. They're doing it on energy every day, whether it's offshore, onshore, natural gas. It's absolutely unconscionable that they would stoop to any measure just to hold on to power. There's an awkwardness about it. It's so obvious, but there again, Mr. Caplan has spoken quite honestly about it. He's going to throw them under the bus, so to speak. That's kind of it. He's expunging the right to strike, a fundamental right, taking it away from them, just yanking it out of their hand.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I can't for a moment—see, here's the difference: You know where the NDP stand. You know where the Conservatives stand—

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** I want to know where you stand.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've just told you, if you were listening, but of course you weren't.

Here's the deal. Now we know that on that side, the only person—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Ancaster.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** —that has been straightforward about it is Mr. Caplan.

I think at the end of the day what Tim Hudak has said to us clearly on this is that it's about fairness for families, fairness for workers and integrity. In this thing, they fail on all three marks, except Mr. Caplan. I think he's a party of one over on the other side. I think he should be running in the leadership against a couple of other—I think Ms. Wynne will be running for leadership, right after Premier McGuinty falls under the bus. That's the way I see it. I think Mr. Bentley will be in the leadership race as well. He's—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I listened intently to the submission from the member from the other side. He has some points, but I'd like to deal with one. He seemed to emphasize the health aspect of it.

I worked in the steel industry for many years in Hamilton and I would safely say that from maybe two stacks in my plant, thousands of tonnes of pollution come out probably daily—thousands of tonnes. In fact, the plants in Hamilton alone would probably pollute more than every car that drove in the city of Toronto in a given week, in a matter of three days. So if this government is really serious about people's health and protecting people, you might want to do something about all those stacks all over Ontario that are putting out tonnes and tonnes of pollution.

He talks about congestion of cars. In any strikes that I went through or anything that happened that I've been involved in, people carpooled, they bicycled, they got friends to drive them if they were elderly; the daughters and sons would make an effort to get mum and dad to the doctor. There are alternatives if there's a disruption in service, but as he kindly pointed out, there weren't all that many disruptions in 20 years—I believe 11 days in the last 12. Eleven days of disruption is not a heck of a lot for collective bargaining.

He talks about the taxpayers of Toronto and how he wants to protect the taxpayers of Toronto. That's great. Are those guys and their members and all the other unions not taxpayers of Toronto? Are you protecting their rights or are you selling them down the river? I think you're selling them down the river. You're not protecting their rights. They pay taxes too. That's another point.

There's more than one union involved in this set of negotiations. There are probably four or five different unions, so you've also cut them off at the legs too. So don't make it look like you're doing a big favour for the people of Toronto.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Member from Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm certainly very pleased to enter into this debate on Bill 150 and in particular to

make a few remarks in support of my colleague from Don Valley East's comments on this issue. I'd like to speak particularly on behalf of my residents in Oak Ridges–Markham. I represent four municipalities in the greater Toronto area. I have four GO stations in my riding; in fact, a fifth one is just across the street.

I spend a great deal of my time trying to encourage most of my residents to make use of the public transit that does exist. We have three GO train lines that all converge on Union Station, and the vast majority of my residents then need the TTC to access their place of work or university or college. During the last TTC strike I heard from the residents of Oak Ridges–Markham—I heard loud and clear—how disturbed they were about the disruption to their lives. People were incredibly anxious about getting to work using the TTC. Whether they were going to school or to work, there was tremendous uncertainty in those days, until, of course, we legislated the TTC workers back to work.

I would certainly say that in this place we obviously hear about competing interests. It is our duty, in fact, to weigh those competing interests very carefully. I have certainly heard very clearly from the residents of my riding where they stand on this issue. It is something that has already been pointed out in the health sector—nurses and hospitals. We've heard from the Minister of Community and Social Services and the member for Don Valley East. The vast majority of settlements are still reached through negotiations, and only as a very last resort is there a need for binding arbitration.

I'm firmly convinced that this is important legislation and we need to pass it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I've listened to the comments by the member for Don Valley East and couldn't disagree more. He comes by his position honestly; I have no doubt about that. Liberals have a strong tradition of setting labour up, setting working people up, just to knock them down, and it's happening again.

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The problem is, this isn't just about denying TTC workers the right to strike. This is a blow to the fundamentals of free, collective bargaining. Inherent in free, collective bargaining is the right to withdraw one's labour. The zeal with which this is being embraced by the Liberals should cause all of us a great deal of concern. There appears to be no hesitation, no second thought, no doubt at all by the Liberals who have been speaking to this matter that it's perhaps more complex than they would have us believe.

There may be Liberal members who have some of those doubts and concerns, but I suspect that they will not prevail during the course of the second reading debate. They may have used their influence in caucus and may be frustrated at the response that their insights received. They may have left shaking their heads about how damned stupid the Premier's office could be, to embark on this sort of tack—and again, not for what's happening

now. You see, it's not just about the ATU, as has been noted, and it's not just about TTC workers and it's not about union leadership. It's about whether or not we cultivate a healthy and mature collective bargaining framework in this province or whether we destroy it and roll us back into the last century.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Don Valley East has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. David Caplan:** I want to thank the members from Durham, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Oak Ridges–Markham and Welland for their comments.

Actually, I was going to pick up exactly where the member from Welland left off. This is about cultivating a bargaining environment that works. As I've demonstrated in my remarks, we currently have a bargaining system, when it comes to the public transit system, the TTC management and the TTC workers, which doesn't work.

The notion that, as the member from Hamilton East says, "Well, you know, they've only been out 11 days"—I think that's a little bit of playing fast and loose. That's true, but that's only because this Legislature reconvened to immediately send the workers back to work. I don't think that really is much of a factor, I say to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. I think what it points to is that we have a collective bargaining system where both sides—this isn't about the workers or the management, because both sides know that if they cannot come to an agreement, if they come to an impasse, if that breaks down, they will be sent to an arbitration system. So why not take a step back? Why not say, "Okay, we're going to do something differently; we're going to put some tension back into the system and try to come to a resolution, but if not, we're going to send the matter to binding interest arbitration"? That's de facto what we have already, but with the \$50-million daily loss and with rider confidence being shattered, and you see that in the ridership numbers lost.

This is about putting confidence back into the Toronto Transit Commission and making sure that the system is reliable, that it's well-run and that the city has confidence in it once again.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to be able to stand today and speak for a few moments on Bill 150, the Toronto Transit Commission Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2011. I was asked to speak on this today, and I wanted to put a few points on the record so I had it clear. I want to read the explanatory note, which is mentioned in the bill, and then go on to a number of other messages and background on it.

"The bill addresses potential labour disputes between the Toronto Transit Commission and bargaining agents representing employees of the Toronto Transit Commission under the Labour Relations Act, 1995.

"The bill prohibits strikes and lockouts and provides for arbitration as the mechanism for achieving a collective agreement when the parties are unable to negotiate an agreement.

"The bill also requires that a review of the act be initiated within one year following the fifth anniversary of the coming into force of the act."

We have some other things I wanted to point out here. The key message from our caucus as we looked at this piece of legislation—it's in response to the request by Mayor Ford, the mayor of the city of Toronto, to make the TTC an essential service. Mayor Ford, as we know, was given a large mandate by the people of Toronto. It was, of course, a plank in his election platform. Why I found this bill a little awkward when I first heard it was going to be introduced immediately was that we know full well that the current members of the government were not supporters of Mayor Ford during his election campaign. We recall that just prior to the election campaign—the week before—they said that there was something like 200 or 300 staffers from the Liberal government offices and MPPs all campaigning against Mayor Ford as he campaigned to be the mayor of the city of Toronto. So what was amazing to see was, suddenly, when the government members saw this shift in the vote—because they thought it was going to be so close for Mr. Smitherman at the time—how they wanted to jump on that kind of a bandwagon and say, "We'd better get onside with Mr. Ford because a large percentage of the people of the city of Toronto are out with Mr. Ford, so we'd better try to jump onside with him on this."

I was amazed to see this introduced the first day back. I thought this would be something that might have been introduced later in the spring week, maybe after the budget, have more time to debate it, maybe not even be passed in this session, maybe passed later on. But I understand that this bill is to be passed very, very quickly; I think even, to my understanding, by the end of March. That's what I think they might want to have happen. I was curious and interested to see that suddenly this shift towards the support for Mayor Ford now caught the government members offside.

I do know, and I do appreciate the fact that the member from Don Valley East spoke on this a while ago in the House. He did have a private member's bill. With due respect to Mr. Caplan, he had a private member's bill, and he has spoken on this in the past, and that's something that he's very serious about. But on the other hand, things, economically, are not sound here really yet, so I'm amazed why it would take eight years of this government—why, in the last session of the eighth year of government, would they decide that this had to be pushed through like that? Why is that? Why wouldn't have this been done three or four years ago, about the time they were going to close the coal-fired generation and those types of things?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** there are 20 seats in Toronto.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** There are a lot of things; there's a lot at stake here. I tell you, I think a lot of it has to do with the seats in the city of Toronto. That's what I think. I've got other things to support that. Not that I don't think that making a certain agency an essential service isn't good at times, but the problem I have as a

member of the PC caucus and as a member of this Legislature is: If we make the Toronto Transit Commission an essential service, what are we going to do about all the other transit commissions in the province? Because, do you know what? I can see those boards sitting in their discussions when they're having their annual—and it might be a labour dispute—and the next thing—we do one; we will be asked to do many others, and that may happen. What did we do for Ottawa? Ottawa was out for months. Am I correct on that? Maybe somebody can correct me. I think it was a number of weeks at least that Ottawa was out. And do you know what? I don't think this—we were asked over and over again, "Can we get back-to-work legislation? What are you going to do about it?" The Minister of Labour said, "We're working in good faith. We're bargaining, we're bargaining, we're bargaining. We're not going to do anything."

But I'll tell you, we come back here for the last session, after the last Parliament, after Rob Ford is sworn in, and here we are creating this legislation just like that. Surely we won't pass it by the end of March; there'll be a lot of consultation with the gentlemen behind this and with the people in the city of Toronto, because the reality is, they deserve a chance to be consulted properly under debate, not pushed through, hammered through and done here within three or four weeks. You've got to remember that in those three or four weeks, we have a constituency week as well, so we've got that to deal with as well. If they want this done by the end of March, they've got to pass it very, very quickly, and I don't really think that's right to the ladies and gentlemen behind this and I don't think it's right for the city of Toronto; they don't get a fair shot at this. I don't see what the urgency really is when we're not doing it for other communities in the province, and we haven't done it for eight years. That's why I'm very, very concerned about it.

1640

With that, I wanted to go into a little bit of the other background on it. The value of the Toronto Transit Commission to the city of Toronto: We've heard that over and over again here today. I don't think there's any question: This is an important agency that we have here in the city of Toronto, if we can call it an agency. The work that's done on the bus routes, on the streetcars and on the subways is what makes the city of Toronto run. There's no question that when it's down, it's down badly, and it does have an impact.

What I think that we have to do at the end is look at what the government has done up to this date. Other than listen to the member from Don Valley East's private member's bill, what have they done is to consult with the general public in the province of Ontario?

So Rob Ford becomes the mayor of Toronto. Great. I like Rob Ford. I think he's a great guy. I wish him well in the next four years. But has there been any other consultation done with the people of the city of Toronto to make this an essential service other than Rob Ford's mandate? I'm not sure if there has or there hasn't, and I would be interested in hearing some of the comments

coming from the members of the government because, obviously, if there has been consultation, they must have been involved in those consultations.

What I want to say is that we're seeing a real trend here, a reaction to what seats the government may win in October or are in jeopardy, and how people are elevated into positions or how projects are cancelled just to make someone look good or weaken the opposition to them.

I think we've seen it really in Oakville. The member from Oakville was just basically written off because of the natural gas generating plant. Suddenly, out of nowhere, there's an announcement, and God only knows how many billions of dollars that's going to cost the people of the province of Ontario in lawsuits and in just overall incompetence on behalf of the government to pull the plug on that project, and then to say back, "Do you know what? We didn't really need it after all. We're building too many solar and wind farms."

Then we look at something like the Minister of Energy's riding, Scarborough Centre, and the Minister of Agriculture's riding, Huron-Bruce. Suddenly, after all these significant projects are announced and there are proposals put forward to create offshore wind turbines, out of nowhere, there's a moratorium on them. Why would that be? Well, I can tell you why: We've done the polling in a couple of those ridings, and that's one of the reasons, particularly in Huron-Bruce—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** It doesn't look good.

You can just go around. There's other seats in jeopardy here as well. Surely we're not making these decisions—did we make the Minister of Labour the Minister of Labour because he might be weak in Mississauga South, and this might prop him up in the city of Toronto? I'm not sure.

But it would look to me as though there's a movement to strengthen the Liberal government MPPs so they won't have quite as much opposition in their ridings come October 6, because we know that the overall polling doesn't look good for them. I think this is a really serious, serious concern of this Legislature. Why are these things sort of coming and going, and they're making these quick announcements?

Yet when they move the natural gas generation from—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Oakville.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** —Oakville, now I understand they're possibly contemplating it in Cambridge. Did I get that? Is that what I actually heard? I actually heard that it might happen in Cambridge. Why would you go from Oakville to Cambridge, let somebody spend all that money, and then have it built in another area? It's really and truly—that's the kind of stuff we're seeing.

I'm not sure. I hope I'm wrong on all this that I'm saying, but it would appear that I'm correct on this. I think if we move through—I can go through a lot of ridings here. I wrote them all down here. I don't want to spend all that time on it.

We even heard that with the cancellation of the offshore wind generation, even the new mayor of

Kingston has been critical of the government. He was supportive of the offshore wind generation—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** He has a father here.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Yes, and apparently he's got someone related to him here in the Legislature.

So this list goes on and on. That's what it looks like is happening. The government is actually making these decisions, and I think this is one of the reasons. I think the government wanted to be on the Rob Ford bandwagon and grab that charisma, grab that movement of the vote, the "get off the gravy train" type thing. This is one thing that doesn't really cost the government anything. It doesn't cost the government anything. It doesn't cost the government anything to put this legislation through, because if they were sincere about this legislation, they would have supported Rob Ford's request today for \$350 million. I'm told that the Premier has denied him flatly. So you give him the legislation that doesn't cost him a nickel but will cost, one way or another, the taxpayers of the city of Toronto money, but you won't give him any of the infrastructure money or whatever the \$350 million is for. That's what I'm hearing here.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Do you know what? I can hear some people heckling me over there. But the reality is, that's what I'm hearing.

Also, I'm curious about the costing of this, what it costs when you do away with collective agreements. If you have arbitration with this particular union, the Toronto Transit Commission union, and we do go to arbitration, there's no question that they will get a higher salary. It will cost the taxpayers more—probably not in terms of net impact on the city of Toronto. But then what does that do to all the other municipalities around us that still have fairly substantial transit systems, in the GTA: Ottawa, Kitchener, maybe even in the Windsor area? They do have transit systems, and when they're down, they're down as well and they do have an economic impact on those cities as well. So I think the cost of arbitration is something—I wonder who has actually examined what happens. We all know that police, fire, nursing and those sorts of things are resolved in arbitrated settlement. They don't even talk about settling anymore. I know that the firefighters just know they're going to arbitration, and that's going to be the end of the path for them.

I can go into a lot of other little details on this but I wanted to just put a few of the things on the record. The bill deals with labour disputes between the TTC and the bargaining unit that represents the employees of the TTC. The bill supersedes anything in the Labour Relations Act, 1995, that allows TTC employees to strike or the TTC the ability to lock out their employees. If the two parties can reach an agreement on arbitrators themselves, they're allowed to select the method of arbitration. If they're unable to do so, mediation/arbitration will automatically be selected. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement on the method of arbitration, the minister will once again select mediation/arbitration unless the min-

ister believes there is a more appropriate method. I'm not sure what that really means.

The bill will allow an arbitrator to be appointed by the minister if the conciliation officer is unable to reach a collective agreement. The administrator will have the final say over who the arbitrator is, and this is not subject to judicial review. The arbitration will take into account criteria that include the employer's ability to pay in light of its fiscal situation, the economic situation in Ontario and the city of Toronto, comparisons between public and private sector employees' terms and conditions of employment, and the extent to which services may have to be reduced in light of a decision if current funding and taxation levels are not decreased. It must be noted that the ability-to-pay criteria set by this bill are lacking in detail and, as such, would be interpreted as weakened criteria by any arbitrator.

Finally, the Toronto Transit Commission is not considered an essential service. Thus, the Labour Relations Act permits employees to go on strike and the employer to lock out the employees in case of labour disputes. That's the current situation. The unionized TTC employees have used strike-to-action nine times, most recently in 2008. The government of Ontario has had to use legislation to end work stoppages five times since 1974.

I didn't realize, in any of my research on this, that there have only been a few days of actual lost time; 11 days is what I'm told today. That's something I'm very curious about knowing what the economic impact was on those 11 days. Maybe some of the members of the government will be able to say what the actual impact was, because I think we have to really and truly deal with that. It was put into force that the strike was costing upwards of \$50 million a day to the city of Toronto in lost economic benefits. I'd like to see the research on that exactly.

I'm curious also—it goes back to the G20 and those sorts of things. Did the city of Toronto make money on the G20 overall or did they lose a lot of money on the G20? I don't know. I'd like to finally see those numbers.

Finally, Mayor Ford and David Caplan, the member from Don Valley East, are both supportive of this. Again, I'll give Mr. Caplan, the MPP for Don Valley East, credit for knowing where his position is on this. I appreciate what his comments were.

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I do think, though, that there are a lot of unanswered questions that I hope the government will answer not only in debate, as we walk our way through this second reading debate, but also in the actual criteria and the actual data and background they'll give us as we get to the committee hearings, because I'm sure there'll be a number of citizens from the city of Toronto. A number of other unions from other communities, I think, would probably want to be part of this. Transit boards in other cities—I think this is going to have an impact on them as well down the road, because I'm sure they'll be asking for arbitration, and I don't know how the government can

turn them down when they've done it for the Toronto Transit Commission. I think we've got some huge areas to deal with there and some huge problems.

Finally, I'm just going to sum up. I don't believe this bill was really a bill that people thought had to happen now. I think we're dealing with it because there's a fall election and they're trying to ride the coattails of Rob Ford into the 2011 election. I'm going to repeat again: We've already seen it with other ridings. We've seen overnight changes—decisions made out of the Premier's office—that have had an impact on other ridings and, as they said, as a result, have strengthened the Liberal members. That will give them an opportunity maybe to have a little more of a battle in October as they try to resolve the loss of a majority government.

On behalf of our caucus, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words. This is an interesting bill to follow through on, and I think that the city of Toronto and the people of Ontario deserve some real strong answers as we go to third reading and committee on exactly what their intent was on this, because they had eight years to do this. They could have done this back in 2003, and they haven't done it. They've waited until this moment when they're very weakened in Toronto, when there's a real opportunity for defeat of the government of Ontario in the fall election. I think it's more politics making this decision to put this legislation through than any real thought for the people of Toronto's transit system or for these men and women behind us.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank the member from Simcoe North. I certainly listened to what he said carefully. I could be wrong, but I get the impression that he would like to see this go to committee. He would like to see people from the transit union and other unions that are involved have their day in court. I certainly hope it isn't one day, and I certainly hope it's not forced through with no discussion through a time allocation motion.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Surely they wouldn't dare.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** They might. If I see a time allocation motion, I'm going to be one unhappy camper.

I really get offended when I see members from the Liberal Party stand up and say that they're for collective bargaining. I don't think so. Take a look at the York University strike. Take a look at what happened here and what they're trying to do. They say they're for the working families of Ontario—not. Don't believe that for a minute. I certainly can't believe that they can stand up and say that they're for collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining is the base of any union: the ability to withhold labour. I guess it's your ace card in the hole. When I saw them give Magna a deal and give away their right to strike there, I almost died on the spot because that group set us back 30, 40 years in bargaining and in union business—40 to 50 years they set us back.

Now this government is about to do the same thing, to join in on the demolition and destruction of collective bargaining in our province, and it's not going to stop

here. Who will be next for essential service? Who knows? If I was a union leader in this province, I'd certainly be very concerned, whether it was public unions or private unions, about where this is going and who's next.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm pleased to comment on the comments by the member from Simcoe North, which, quite frankly, I found a little odd, because if I'm following him correctly, he's miffed because the McGuinty government is doing something that Rob Ford would like, and he thinks only Tories should do things Rob Ford likes, not us. I think that's what he said. But quite frankly, this has absolutely nothing to do with whether or not you happen to like Rob Ford. This has to do with whether or not the TTC should be deemed an essential service.

Toronto city council, on behalf of the populace of the city of Toronto, said to us in December—not eight years ago, but in December—"We believe that you should designate the TTC as an essential service." We have taken some time to look at that, and we think that is a reasonable request by the city of Toronto, by the people of the city of Toronto; hence the legislation that's before us.

As I think back through the importance and the integral nature of public transit in Toronto, I think of my aunt and my uncle who bought a house probably 50 years ago in Toronto. They located it so they were a block away from a bus line that my uncle could walk to. He could take the bus and get on the subway and get downtown, a few blocks from here, to work. That has been going on for 50 years in the city of Toronto, that people depend on the TTC to get to work, to get to school.

In fact, my own constituents who live in Guelph, but people all along the GO line that heads out west and east of here, depend on the TTC as well, because when the GO trains bring them in, when the Greyhound buses bring them in, when the GO buses bring them in, they need the TTC.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I'm pleased to comment on my caucus colleague from Simcoe North. I think he has raised some excellent points in his speech, talking about the timing of it and wondering if and hoping that we will, in fact, ensure that we get public consultation on a bill that's going to so dramatically affect the city of Toronto.

He raised the interesting fact of the timing of it, that it wasn't important when the private member's bill came forward from—I'm sorry—David Caplan, who is from—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Don Valley East.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Don Valley East. Thank you very much. This was brought forward by him as a private member's bill and has, of course, languished, as many private members' bills seem to do, sitting in second reading, waiting for public input, waiting for the consultation that needs to happen between second and third reading.

Yet, magically, we seem to be able to bring forward this legislation on the first day back of the spring session.

So I do question the timing and the optics of it, but as my colleague from Simcoe North mentioned, if we can have the public hearings, if we can get the public input, I think it's an important piece of legislation that we need to look at.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** What we have learned this afternoon, what has been displayed so clearly by the Liberal speakers, is that the nicest thing about being a Liberal is that you don't always have to be a Liberal. You can change your principles the way other people change their Jockey shorts and their socks. If one principle doesn't suit you, you just try another one. I appreciate that opportunity so the people of Ontario can learn that the nicest thing about being a Liberal is that you don't always have to be a Liberal, and these Liberals are demonstrating that, oh, so clearly.

I'm excited because speaking next is our member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who will be splitting his time, sharing his time with our member for Nickel Belt. The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is a fiery, take-no-prisoners speaker. He will be ripping some people some new ones this afternoon, I'm sure, in the brief period of time allotted to him. They'll be walking out of here not knowing whether they've been drilled, punched or bored. Again, he brings passion to this. He brings a lifetime of experience on the shop floor. He's a committed trade unionist and has not abandoned those principles or those values, like so many of us that are the children of industrial workers, myself included—it's part of our DNA. I mean, heck, I spent more Sundays at the Ukrainian Labour Temple than I ever did in a church. That's maybe to my detriment, but it just demonstrates, I suppose, where the direction was and the focus was and the value systems were in that small town, Crowland, that I was born in and grew up in.

1700

As I say, people should pay close attention, because in around two minutes' time the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and the member for Nickel Belt will be speaking to this matter, both strong New Democrats, both strong trade union supporters, both strong advocates for working women and men in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Simcoe North has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to thank the members from Guelph, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Dufferin–Caledon and Welland for their comments to my speech.

I don't expect that the Liberals wouldn't want to be supportive of Mayor Ford somehow. I just can't believe that back on October 24 they had 500 or 600 people out of their Liberal offices knocking on doors all through Toronto so he wouldn't get elected, and now he snaps his fingers wanting this legislation put through—in what looks like warp-speed time—and they're on his side. It's

unbelievable. These are the people who did not want Rob Ford as the mayor of Toronto. That was clear and you can read their comments on it; they wanted George Smitherman to be the mayor of Toronto, plain and simple. That's the way it was. But what's happened is that Rob Ford snapped his fingers and Dalton McGuinty put this legislation through, like that. I'm guessing that it will go through at warp speed. Probably everything will be time-allocated—that's my bet—and the third reading will be time-allocated as well, because they do want it.

They had eight years to do this bill. You had eight years to put this legislation through if you were really—you could have consulted in that period of time. You could have done all kinds of preliminary work. I'm really interested as to who really consulted on this at all. I don't think there was any consultation done at all, only with Rob Ford's office and Dalton McGuinty's office, because he's seen the Rob Ford steamroller coming through Toronto and he wants to be on that as much as possible so that he won't get beat badly in the city of Toronto on October 6 of this year. Mark my words: That's the reason.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate? The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's always a pleasure to see you in the chair. I'd like to start by saying that I will be sharing my time with the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who has been very much looking forward to his time to speak, so I'll be brief.

I feel like we are playing a bit of a numbers game here when it comes to calling public transit an essential service and basically taking away basic rights of workers in this province. If we look at other cities—I know Toronto is all-consuming. We are all very proud of our capital city in Ontario, but there is life outside of Toronto. I happen to live in northern Ontario, where we also have public transit for the city of Sudbury.

When I hear some of the arguments that if the TTC were to go on strike, then health care workers couldn't go to long-term-care homes, they couldn't go to the community health centres and they wouldn't be able to go to the hospital—well, that applies to every city in Ontario. In every city that has public transit, people take public transit to go work their shift at the hospital, to go work their shift at the long-term-care homes, to go work their shift at the community health centre or anywhere else. People take public transit everywhere, but it seems that if it's people in Toronto doing work, that work becomes way, way more important than the same work being done anywhere else in the province. If somebody goes in a long-term-care home in Sudbury, well, you know—but if somebody needs the TTC to go to a long-term-care home in Toronto, well, this is it. This cannot be put aside, because maybe there could be a strike at some point. This makes no sense from the view that I'm looking at it.

It seems to me that the numbers game—it's like there are magic numbers in there. I keep hearing that 1.5

million people take the TTC. Is this like, it doesn't matter where you are in Ontario, but once you've reached 1.5 million users, automatically you're an essential service? Hey, Tim Hortons could be next on the list, because, believe me, there's a lot of people that go there. We will reach 1.5 million users and they'll be deemed an essential service, won't they? And we will take away their right to strike also, won't we?

Or is it a percentage thing? If there were to be a strike, there could be a blow of \$50 million to the economy of Toronto. Here's another magic number: If we reach \$50 million in possible economic impact, we can take away your basic rights. Your rights are for sale. Every single worker in Ontario, your rights are up on eBay, and if we get \$50 million for them we're going to sell them away. You're going to lose your right to strike. You're going to lose your liberty, your dignity, your basic rights for \$50 million. I didn't know there was a price on rights; I really didn't know. But today the Liberals told me that the price is \$50 million.

I find this a very slippery slope, because what if those numbers then become percentages? So if 25% of the people in any given city take transit, like is the case in Toronto, then you become an essential service. You are deemed essential, and we take away your right to strike. I could just imagine—Sudbury ridership has really gone up. I'm really proud of the people in Sudbury and Nickel Belt using public transit more and more. We're about to reach this 25% ridership capacity, similar to Toronto, but does that mean that our transit workers' rights are at risk also, that we are about to take their right to strike away?

Then I start thinking, if they are deemed essential, then the road maintenance, the snowplow operator, have to be deemed essential also, because there's no point in having buses on the road if nobody clears them. Okay, so now we have transit workers as essential workers who have lost their right to strike. The next ones will be the maintenance workers because, hell, we live in northern Ontario. We live in Canada. It snows in the winter, so if you don't have people clearing the roads—they must be essential. I'll throw in Tim Hortons again, because if the snowplow operator doesn't get his coffee at 4 a.m., believe you me, it's not going to be a pretty sight. So now every worker in Ontario is deemed essential and our rights have been given away for a cup of coffee.

This is a slippery slope. Think about your arguments. Your argument doesn't hold. The arguments that because there's more people that live here, because there's a higher percentage, because there's more business being done here, this puts your rights basically to the back of the bus where nobody cares about them anymore—this is a very, very slippery slope.

I don't know why we would go down this slope. Look at any other countries that don't have labour rights. I was in Brazil last year where they are fighting for the right to have a 50-hour work week. I remember those fights, way, way back then. I'm not interested in going back there. I like our standard of living the way we have it now, and much of it is because of the labour battles that we have

won. I'm not interested in a step back. I'm not interested in selling our labour rights for \$50 million or any other amount of money, for that matter. To me, this makes no sense whatsoever. But as my colleague from Welland said, it is so typical of a Liberal government—a Liberal government that sometimes says yes and sometimes says no.

I have been doing a lot of work on temporary replacement workers, which was a huge issue in my riding. We had brought this for second reading of a private member's bill in October 2009. Let me read you the number of Liberal members still here who through the years have either voted against repealing temporary replacement workers or spoken in favour of having temporary replacement workers legislation—better known as anti-scab—but who have changed their minds.

We start with the member from York South-Weston, the member from Scarborough—Rouge River—the Minister of Housing changed his mind; he even went down to a conference in Florida and said how important anti-scab legislation was for this province, and now votes against it—the Minister of Health Promotion, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the member from Algoma—Manitoulin, the member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, the member from Etobicoke Centre, the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, the member from Essex, the Minister of Finance—a fine speech he gave, how important it was when Mike Harris was trying to repeal the law that the NDP had brought forward. You see, the NDP had brought forward anti-scab legislation. Mr. Harris at the time wanted to take those rights away. Our Minister of Finance was in opposition at the time and he just let them have it, how it wouldn't make sense to take away those rights. But here he sits today and refuses to support it.

1710

We have the member from Kingston and the Islands, we have the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, we have the member from Chatham—Kent—Essex, the member from Oak Ridges—Markham, the Minister of Natural Resources, the member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. The member for Brant—I raise my hat to you—voted in favour of anti-scab legislation. We have the member from Mississauga—Brampton South. The Premier even talked about how important it was to have anti-scab legislation when he was in opposition. He didn't want Mike Harris to take those rights away, but now that he has been sitting in the Premier's chair for the last eight years, he says that he won't bring temporary replacement workers or scabs in if the public sector strikes, but he's not ready to give that security to all of the other workers. We have the member from Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, we have the member from Richmond Hill, the member from Scarborough—Agincourt—my handwriting is really bad—the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, the member from London—Fanshawe, the member from Northumberland—Quinte West, the member from Davenport, the member from Guelph, the member from York

West, the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Transportation.

Those are a lot of people who, when it was time to act—and they have been in positions where they can—are not doing it. But yet we see on the ground right now the devastating effect that this has on our communities, that this has on people, on workers, on families. It tears apart the social fabric of our community. It's really easy to say that we want to build healthy communities and we don't want the TTC to have the right to go on strike because this will hurt our communities, but yet they're ready to let other labour laws tear apart the social fabric of our community.

*Interjection.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm told by my gentle colleague here that I have to stop my little rant, but I still have a lot of it left in me and I'm really sorry that my time is up.

What I want people to remember is that with this bill, we are starting on a slippery slope. We are starting on a slope that says that if the numbers are big enough, if the money is high enough, we will sell your basic rights. How can we have this in this province, in Ontario? Workers have rights. They have fought for each and every one of them, and we now have a government that's ready to take that away.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and my colleague from Sudbury. I didn't think she was going to stop. She was wound right up.

I'd like to continue. I had a flow going about some of the comments from John Tory, the former leader of the Conservative Party, and they were good points. Mr. Tory also said on his show:

"I also think it is irresponsible and highly political, the kind of fostering they really haven't been doing at Rob Ford's city hall. I think it's highly political not to sit down and seriously consider the 'no strike' offer made by transit union president Bob Kinnear.

"If this really was about not having a strike, if you think about it for a minute, and if it wasn't about political points or ideology or settling old scores, which it shouldn't be about, then Karen Stintz and Rob Ford should be sitting down day and night with Bob Kinnear to really aggressively explore whether they can work out, say, a three-year or ... five-year no-strike deal with Bob Kinnear.

"He made an unusual opening offer and Dalton McGuinty should be telling Rob Ford and Karen Stintz that he insists they sit down and talk to him about this or at least make every effort before he, Dalton McGuinty, will pass the legislation declaring the TTC an essential service.

"Because once that's done, then it's done. Get your wallet out; get your wallet out. And I think Dalton McGuinty's failure to at least to do that and tell them to sit at the table and talk to Bob Kinnear would suggest he too is playing politics in an election year.

"To just move ahead like a bull in a china shop when the union has expressed its willingness to talk will cause more bitterness and more conflicts and it will be very, very expensive, and fails to even consider another way to avoid a strike."

This is a reasonable analysis by Mr. Tory of the essential service designation and a strong message about the failure in their duties by the mayor, the TTC chair and the Premier to act responsibly for and truly represent the citizens and taxpayers of this city. Hear, hear.

These are my words now: In addition to the impact on the TTC drivers, the essential service declaration will also affect the Canadian Union of Public Employees, CUPE; the International Association of Machinists, IAM; and likely some IBEW members. This essential service designation is not just about the TTC drivers; it's also about the other unionized employees, who may not have the same negotiation or contract issues, who may not have had anything to do with the ATU issues, and who may not have been on strike for even 11 days over the past 20 years. Why are they, no pun intended, being dragged under the bus? The reality of only 11 days lost to strikes at the TTC over 20 years must be understood by every member of this Legislature. It's a little more than half a day a year.

This essential service legislation is using a sledgehammer when a tack hammer would do the job and when a solution is already before their eyes and ears in Local 113's president's guarantee of no strike during these negotiations. What more could a union president do than step up to the plate and say, "Look, I want to talk; I understand the importance of my members and their jobs in Toronto. I want to talk" But this government is saying no, and Rob Ford is saying, "No, you'll do what you're told, and you'll eat it."

This legislation is all about playing politics in an election year and playing to a hammer-fisted, poorly-thought-out, ideologically-driven, fiercely right-wing agenda at the municipal level. It is clear that the mayor of the city of Toronto should never have more power; he can't handle what he's got now. But for this Premier to aid and abet him in this strong-arm legislation tells us that he is prepared to use his majority in this Legislature, and to use all of us, in his blatant attempt to gain votes in Toronto.

Every card-carrying union member in Ontario and, more specifically, every single union leader should pay very, very close attention to the real Dalton McGuinty. He will strip you of whatever he wishes for his own political gain. Stop supporting this anti-union government. Send Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal union-busters a strong message. Stand up for what unions believe in. Stand up for your brothers and sisters. Stand up for the membership you represent. Don't let this happen. Don't support Dalton McGuinty or any Liberal or PC, for that matter, who supports Rob Ford's right-wing essential service designation for the TTC.

I know that many of our union brothers and sisters are already designated as essential services—police officers

and firefighters, for example. However, when this designation is solely for political purposes and not for the health and safety of the citizens, all of us should be able to agree that this is wrong.

Yes, I know that many decisions are politically and ideologically motivated, but when the record shows that this particular action will end up costing Torontonians more, we really must take a large step back and stop this out-of-control attack on collective bargaining.

The stats show that when there is no right to strike, when disputes go to a conciliator, and ultimately to an arbitrator, decisions more frequently go in favour of the union, which isn't a bad thing, but it will cost. They want a collective agreement; they don't want to force arbitration. They're actually doing due diligence for the people of Toronto; they want to be fair. When you put it to an arbitrator, it may even cost the taxpayers more money—not a smart move, I don't think.

One also has to remember that this legislation does not prohibit work-to-rule, which is really working exactly to the terms of an existing contract. I don't think that our TTC drivers would stop their vehicle to perform safety drills, but that might be possible, like they did on the BC ferries several years ago. They worked to rule and held fire and emergency drills and practices on their ships, and they were in the middle of the crossings when they did it.

Are you naive enough to think that these union members cannot slow things down with work-to-rule? "Oh, your bus won't be ready until next week; it needs more work on the engine," when the bus might well have been ready—or other ways to do things to slow down the process because they're not being treated fairly, because this government and that city would not deal with them fairly. They have ways; unions have ways. It may cause delays, but it was not permitted in the contract.

1720

It was also likely a good drill in the eyes of those advocates for health and safety practices in the workplace.

In this situation, the legislation only affects the TTC employees, but this is the thin edge of the wedge. Will GO Transit be next? How about schoolteachers? How about government workers, hospital workers, doctors, nurses and everyone else who provides a public service? Will they become essential? With this ideologically driven piece of legislation so happily tabled by the McGuinty Liberals, who is next going to demand what of him? Who else will they throw under the bus or the train and for what reason?

This McGuinty government dances to a tune played by Mayor Ford while ignoring the very generous offer by Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 113, president Bob Kinnear to guarantee no strike action during these contract negotiations. Why on earth did Premier McGuinty ignore this offer? Why has this government completely dismissed what is surely a unique opportunity to bring about labour peace at the city for a few years? Why have the McGuinty Liberals ensured that unionized workers have every reason to fear their government? What is really behind this legislation?

Certainly, it's not because there might be a strike that could cause a loss of votes in Toronto. Would it be that? The union has already guaranteed that there would be no strike. It makes absolutely no sense, unless one looks at the other attacks on organized labour by this government. They tried to impose a zero-wage increase this year, only to be found wrong by the very conciliators and mediators and arbitrators or judiciary they appoint.

Let's look at this in a broader context. This government has attacked grandparents raising their grandchildren. They know that they have wrong directives, but they flatly refuse to fix the errors. This goes on and on and on. I could read forever.

This does not make sense. It's going to cause more problems for the city of Toronto and the people of Toronto. I'd like to talk to these people a couple of years from now and see what they think because it could be a very interesting response.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have some remarks with reference to some of the preceding commentary. My honourable colleague the MPP from Nickel Belt spent considerable time referring to Tim Hortons as a possible essential service. Be that as it may, I, too, share her affection for coffee, but if such a request were to emerge, I suspect or hope that it would be subject to the same consultation, report from the appropriate union and commission and probably a vote on council. Then and only then would the government of Ontario be willing to consider it.

My colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek quite rightly and legitimately cited the offer of the union president Bob Kinnear, the no-strike offer as it would enter into this particular round of negotiations, the contract which is expiring March 31, 2011. But on my desk, I'm in possession of the correspondence that emanated from the most recent consultations between the various unions involved—ATU 113, IAM 235, CUPE and the Ministry of Labour—dated February 10, 2011, which have not moved forward and from which they emerged at an impasse. That adds to the urgency, particularly given, as well, the December 16 vote by Toronto city council.

A great deal has been said about the timing—some of the issues that we've mentioned. But I would like to announce—not only to you, Speaker, but also to those who are listening and watching and to those who are in this audience—that as of April 2008, on a fateful Sunday, the NDP joined with the Conservative Party and with our government in order to effect immediate back-to-work legislation to the TTC, whose contract, as you know, had expired. It's for precisely those reasons that we are enacting this as a fundamental legislation—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** On a point of order, Speaker: The member is giving false information.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** No, that's not a point of order.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased to have this opportunity to respond briefly to the speeches that were given this afternoon by the member for Nickel Belt and the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek. I gather one of them will be responding shortly to the comments.

Certainly, the New Democrats in the House, on this Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission, have been quite principled and consistent in their opposition to this bill.

Let's take a quick look at what the bill will do if passed:

"The bill addresses potential labour disputes between the Toronto Transit Commission and bargaining agents representing employees of the Toronto Transit Commission under the Labour Relations Act, 1995....

"The bill prohibits strikes and lockouts and provides for arbitration as the mechanism for achieving a collective agreement when the parties are unable to negotiate an agreement: see sections 3 to 21.

"The bill also requires that a review of the act be initiated within one year following the fifth anniversary of the coming into force of the act...."

I know that most members of this Legislature will recall a number of emergency sessions where we've been called into session, in some cases on a Sunday, to discuss, debate and vote upon legislation to end transit strikes in the city of Toronto.

I would certainly agree that in 2011 and future years going forward, transit service in Toronto is an essential service for the well-being of the city: to allow people to get to work, to get to medical appointments, to get to school—all of the important trips that people need to take on a daily basis. There are a substantial number of people who live in downtown Toronto who don't have cars because they use transit; they buy a transit pass.

Certainly, I make use of the TTC frequently. This evening, in fact, I'll be using the subway to go down to the ROMA-Good Roads Conference. Many members of the Legislature, I know, use the TTC as well.

I would again compliment the New Democrat members for the consistency of their presentations and look forward to their replies.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** You see, that's precisely the problem, and that's why the research and the analysis, for over 50 years now, talks about how compulsory arbitration regimes undermine collective bargaining and, rather than reinforce, they scuttle a mature relationship between workers and management, because there's no need to develop that mature relationship; there's no need to work collaboratively. Both the TTC, the commission, as well as the union, the ATU, have, over the course of years, been trained that at some point there will be back-to-work legislation, probably sooner rather than later. That's not helpful. That's not conducive to developing a responsible collective bargaining relationship between management and labour.

What this bill does is it entrenches that, and the scenario will become worse rather than better. It will become worse and worse rather than better. The relationship between workers—labour—and management will deteriorate to a point where there will be, I have no doubt about it, grief for the city of Toronto, grief for consumers, grief for the workers and untold levels of grief for management.

This is a wrong-headed policy decision. It's this government slavishly responding to the beck and call of newly elected Mayor Rob Ford, who was going to cut the gravy train but now, almost within hours of being elected and having the popular support of the people of Toronto, announces he's going to spend \$3 million on consultants. As I said earlier, that's not a gravy train, that's a caviar train. We'll see whose friends those consultants happen to be once they're made public.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I want to comment on both members' comments.

The member from Nickel Belt does hit on a point that is very concerning as well, although she should probably expand on that point about the \$50 million; look at it as a percentage of the local income as well. So with Sudbury, when you talk about the ridership hitting the 25% mark, is it a matter of—in Sudbury there's certainly not going to be a \$50-million impact. What would it take in Sudbury, Ottawa or London or the other components around?

As well, some of the other aspects: the Tim Hortons one I don't necessarily agree with. I think that's a private enterprise, whereas taxpayers are paying for the ridership here.

I do agree with asking where the line comes in and where it does not. What is the deciding factor? Are we going to do garbage—because that could be the next one. Are there other options that are potentially available, such as introducing competition? All of a sudden, as opposed to contractual agreements, is it going to be allowed to deregulate busing to allow competitive busing or other transit users into the areas? There are all sorts of options that have not been discussed that could be brought forward.

1730

As well, it's good to hear the member from Hamilton Mountain mentioning the John Tory show. It's good to hear that somebody's listening to it. Frankly, I'm not.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Oh, that's mean.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Just a little bit of jest there.

But it is a serious issue. We certainly want to ensure that it does go to committee, that there are fair hearings, so that all of these aspects can be brought forward and discussed in the Legislature because, quite frankly, when you look around the world and see what's happening worldwide, I don't think it's a slippery slope. I think it's an intent to try and deal with an issue that may impact the economy here, the so-called centre of the province of Ontario. Although a lot of us don't like to agree that it supposedly is, it certainly has a huge impact. How that

impacts in other parts of the province and the country may unfold there. We only need to look around and see what's happening to know that it's not over yet. There are a lot more things coming in this world.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Nickel Belt has up to two minutes to respond.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I'm sort of sorry that everybody listened to Tim Hortons and didn't listen to the rest of the things that I had to say because Tim Hortons was a joke.

What I was trying to say was that we are entering a slippery slope. The slippery slope is right here, right now. We are taking rights away from Ontarians. When you take rights away from people, you are making serious decisions. Those serious decisions will lead you down a slope. The example I was giving is that they keep saying the ridership is 1.5 million, the economic impact is \$50 million, and somehow those two numbers are supposed to be justification in and of themselves to take away people's rights. I disagree with this. There is no magic number.

Then what I did was a parallel. If the ridership in Toronto is 1.5 million, what does that translate to in Ottawa, Sudbury or Kingston? When we reach those magic numbers, the 25% ridership in all of those cities, they will be deemed essential, they will lose their right to strike?

We're talking about a \$50-million economic impact. If there was ever to be a strike at TTC, is this \$50 million by itself compared to how much money rolls into Toronto on a daily basis?

I had gone on to say that that slippery slope could bring us really far down. At the end of the day, it is a serious decision. We are taking basic rights that we take for granted for all Ontarians. All workers have this one right to withdraw their labour when negotiations have come to an impasse, and we're taking that right away. Let's make sure that we have full, lengthy public hearings on that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Amen. Further debate, yes. I'm the last speaker of the day.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Are you sure?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I think so. I'm the main speaker, then there's the two minutes and the two minutes and the two minutes, but I have a few minutes in which I'd like to address the House.

Let me say that everyone in the House will soon—I have no idea how soon, but everyone is going to have a chance to decide how they're going to be voting on this particular item. I am somewhat confused here because they all wanted to have a serious debate. They wanted to have a serious debate, and I'm still waiting to hear that serious debate because the only thing I've heard from the opposition is pointing the finger at McGuinty and the Liberals, forgetting the real issue. If there are people who are playing politics with this issue, not considering it as seriously as they should, it's the opposition. Soon they

will have to declare who they will be standing for. Absolutely.

I have no problem where I'm standing, but to come to this chamber and play politics with the highest octane does not serve the interests of the people here, does not serve the people out there, does not serve the people of Metro Toronto, does not serve the people up in the Nickel Belt area—does not help anyone.

I hope that we all get a good chance when it goes for public hearings, because they know better. They don't have to say "if" or "I hope." They know that this is going to go for public hearings, and I think they should be lining up themselves with the people who have an interest in the issue and saying, "We want you to come and give it your best." It would be very interesting if there would be a recommendation coming out of those consultations where Mayor Ford and council would say, "Whoa, whoa, hold it a second here. We want you people not to do anything more about it." I would be very interested to find out where these people, where the opposition would stand.

They come to the House with the intention to debate a very important issue and then they go and trivialize it, and I'll tell you why, because I've been here all afternoon listening to every speaker. I haven't missed a word and I have chosen the best.

An "assault on workers": Can you believe that? An assault on workers from us, from the Liberals? Can you believe that?

McGuinty's agenda: Wow. Are they addressing the real issue? No, it's McGuinty's agenda. McGuinty has an agenda. My goodness gracious.

The Wisconsin case: the same Wisconsin case as this particular issue? A little bit of hilarity. It's like saying that spaghetti with tomato sauce and basil is the same as linguine alfredo. Can you believe that? Can you see the two of them? Tomato sauce and alfredo sauce: Can you call those the same? I don't think so. You cannot compare the Wisconsin case with this particular issue.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Why not?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Ford asking for \$195 million—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Welland will take his seat, please, if he's going to make comments.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Because it doesn't—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could the member stop for a second?

Stop the clock. I would ask the member from Welland to take his seat if he's going to make comments, thank you.

Continue, please.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** He's being jovial. That's okay. He can kid around, I don't mind.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Can you explain to him what alfredo sauce is?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** If you don't know, you're missing something.

Are we jumping when Ford is going to call again? How short of a memory we pretend to have. They don't have a short memory; they pretend. The McGuinty government has given the former administration of the city of Toronto, led by Mayor Miller, more money than any other time in the history of the province of Ontario. But you know what? If and when the mayor comes asking for money and they deserve it, I am sure this government will respond accordingly because it is not Ford, it is the people of Toronto who will benefit from it.

Only Toronto: I have the greatest respect for the member from Nickel Belt. Only Toronto? With all due respect, we can't compare. I have all the respect for her and for whatever she's doing for her people, but we can't compare Toronto, the needs of Toronto, two and a half million people surrounded by another three or four million people here, with Nickel Belt or any other area. I'm sure that if Nickel Belt or any other area were to come up and ask, this Premier would be listening as well.

Let me tell the members one particular story, because time is going fast. I can still see, at the corner of Islington and Rowntree Mill, the bus shelter, which was full. It was 7:30 in the morning, and there was a little old lady shivering outside hoping that every car that went by would recognize her, or she would recognize some of the drivers and hitch a ride.

1740

I had to slow down because I was making a right turn, and she saw me. She was holding a little bag. She looked through the window and she said, "Oh, Mario, Mario." I opened up and I said, "What are you doing here? There is no bus coming." "Can you please take me?" I said, "Come on in, come on in."

Then I saw the bus shelter full of people. I said, "Anybody else want to come in?" So I had six people in my car by then.

I said to the lady, "What are you doing at this hour in the morning?" "Well, I'm going every day to the nursing home to see my husband." I said, "But there is no service, so what are you doing? There is no service." She said, "Oh my goodness. What am I going to do now? How long? By 12 o'clock it's coming back?" I said, "I don't think so. You won't get a bus by 12 o'clock. Maybe in a few days." "Oh, no. What am I going to do in a few days? I've got to go every day to see my husband."

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** This is a long story.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Is that the best you can do?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** You know what? They don't like to hear how the people of Toronto feel. But let me say, where I come from—Islington and Steeles all the way to Scarborough—Rouge River—all the major amenities are located in downtown Toronto. You come and tell my people up in Humber Summit—it takes me an hour and 20 minutes to come by car. How long would it take them by bus, if there is a bus? You tell those people that they have to come to see the amenities in downtown Toronto when there is no service.

The people in my area are hard-working working-class people. A lot of them are students. They can't afford cars.

They can't afford the insurance. York University has some 45,000 to 48,000 students. We get an average of 1,861 buses daily. Can you imagine not having that for a week or three weeks or a month? Can you visualize that?

We think we are funny. Just because the request came from the mayor of Toronto—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Eleven days—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Member from Hamilton East.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** With all due respect, Madam Speaker, I don't mind. They can talk as much as they want. But I have been sitting here all afternoon listening to each one of them, and I never interrupted once. The more they do that, the more they attract attention to themselves. Because you know what? We don't listen to Mayor Ford; we listen to the people of Toronto and beyond.

They pretend they don't know. If we can say that Ontario is the engine of Canada, Toronto certainly has to be the engine of Ontario. Would they disagree with that? I don't think so. But it's okay for them to snicker when there are some political issues that are convenient for them.

The member from—where is it?—Hamilton-Stoney Creek?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** No, it's Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** He says the only reason we are debating this item here is for political reasons. Isn't that nice? I hope that the people here and the people outside will be paying attention to that. Then he says, "I really would like to know what the people of Toronto think about this." If they were seriously interested, they would know what the people of Toronto think. The figures are there. The data, the information, is all out there. It's been provided to them. They just don't want to know because it's not convenient to them. But that is not fair, that is not honest, and that is not the right type of debate we should be having in this House on behalf of the people not only of Toronto—we say Toronto because it's here, but the people of Ontario would feel the consequences.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order. Member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I will give my colleague, the member, the figures. In the most recent poll done by the city of Toronto, 75% would like to see the TTC declared an essential service. Sometimes that goes to 90%. One better for my Conservative friends as well: 83% of the candidates who ran for council in the last elections who were supporting the idea of declaring the TTC an essential service all won; 83%, if they want to know where the people of Toronto stand on the issue.

So what was it exactly that the city of Toronto requested? Well, first it was Ford's idea during the election, and we can—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock for a second. I have asked for order, and I've asked the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to please not yell across the aisle several times now. Please, order. Let's hear the rest of the speech of the member from York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you, Speaker.

During the campaign, Mr. McGuinty said if Ford or whoever is going to win asks the province to take some action, we will so do. And he did. He did say we will act swiftly if we get a request to do so. And he did, and here it is. Where did the request come from? Because it came from the mayor of Toronto, oh, now we are accusing McGuinty. Isn't that convenient?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Will you please mention the title rather than the name as well?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Premier of Ontario, Mr. McGuinty. I apologize, Speaker.

So the council of the city of Toronto, what did they do? They debated it. They did. They may not be aware, but they did. They have met with all the interested parties to the deal. They voted 28 to 17 in favour. The executive committee, what did they do? They recommended approval. The brass, the commissioners of the TTC itself, what did they do? They voted in favour. They voted to recommend, and so did the executive; then, ultimately, so did council say yes, we should request the province to pass legislation and declare it an essential service.

We said before that fire, police and health workers are also governed by such type of legislation. Have we seen any problems? Have you seen any problem, Madam Speaker? We haven't.

You know what? The TTC workers in my area and other workers who work for the city, for other ministries or for other departments, love it. This is what they told me: "We would rather work and do our job. As long as we do our job, we know we're going to have a job and we're going to get paid."

Who said—the member from Welland? I think no, it was Ms. Horwath, the leader herself, who said that ultimately they're going to get more money when they go to arbitration. Well, then, what's the problem? They still have the bargaining tool, only if they don't agree, they will be referred to an arbitrator. Now, isn't that nice? So if I go by the poll in my area, by the people in my area when they say, "I want to make sure that I have that convenience, that I can go shopping"—see, the area that we have, far north, east and west, is not so well served by transit, and when you have people coming and going seven days a week, they rely on that transit. They rely on that convenience. Why should we deny it, provided that we do not hinder the jobs of our employees? I think this is the most important thing that we should be looking at.

1750

This item here is a first step. This is going to go to public hearings. And I would love to see the members sitting on that committee coming forth and then bringing to this House their optional recommendations, as the member from Beaches–East York said. Is there any other

option? Well, let's explore it. Let's see which way we can do even better. But don't come to this House pretending, wanting to sit on both sides of the fence.

You know what? We have a very educated workforce out there. We know that. And they will see that, so we cannot pretend, as the Conservatives did, that we are in support of the bill, and then come to the House and point fingers. At least the NDP are being consistent. They say no; bingo. Good or bad, they say no. That's fine. But soon we are going to have the opportunity where each member of the House will have to vote on this issue: amend it, optional, somehow—I have no idea—or as it is. When the city of Toronto is asking the province to do something that, for a change, I have to say, they come forward with a reasonable request, and we don't even look at it—I would like to ask the two opposition parties there how they would be attacking McGuinty and the Liberals if we were to say—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** "Mr. McGuinty."

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Not Mr. McGuinty; the Premier of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would remind the member: the Premier, not his name.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** If the Premier of this province—the Premier, Mr. McGuinty himself—were to say, "We're not even looking at it," can you believe the cry coming out from that side? "Premier McGuinty is not even paying attention, not even looking at what the mayor of Toronto, the mayor of 2.5 million people, affecting another three million people—he's not even listening. He doesn't want to talk to him and doesn't want to listen to him. A council vote of 28 votes versus 17: The Premier does not want to hear them." I said we should hear them and we would welcome any other reasonable request for the benefit of the people of Toronto and Ontario.

In so doing, I look forward to when this item comes back, having travelled, and the opposition has had a say, they will have heard, and they will come back to this House and vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was quite an interesting 20 minutes. The first bit of it really had me puzzled. How can anybody say that you cannot compare the good people of Toronto with anybody else in Ontario? I'm sorry; the people of Toronto get up in the morning, get dressed and go to work just like the people in every single one of our ridings do. Toronto is not that different, and this is where the numbers game starts again. It's to justify a very important decision, to justify taking away rights. We quote numbers: 1.5 million ridership. We quote money: \$50 million. And now we quote the number of buses: 1,889 buses is the magic number that allows you to take away the rights of workers in Ontario. What is this? This makes no sense whatsoever.

Then he talks about how popular this idea is. Well, popularity does not make something right. It's not because—hey, I'm a francophone. If you look at funding

of francophone activities and you poll it, I'm pretty much ready to bet that we're not going to have a popularity contest. Does that mean that francophones should not exist in Ontario? Of course not. We have the French Language Services Act because we know that popularity does not make for good policy. It does not justify taking away people's rights, and this is the argument that this member was bringing forward: the number of buses and the 75% or 33% of ridership who want to take workers' rights away.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** My honourable colleague from Nickel Belt spoke about the value and importance of francophonie to Ontario.

Comme les députés de la Chambre le savent, le 16 décembre 2010, le conseil municipal de Toronto a présenté une demande au moyen d'une motion voulant que la province « désigne comme service essentiel les transports en commun de Toronto ». Notre gouvernement respecte le droit du conseil municipal de Toronto de parler au nom de la population de cette ville. Le projet de loi se rapporte à une circonstance vraiment unique en son genre.

Il y a des milliers de passagers qui n'ont ni le temps ni l'argent de conduire et de se garer au centre-ville, en supposant qu'il y ait des places de stationnement libres en cas d'arrêt de travail de la CTT.

Dans le grand Toronto, il y a 40 hôpitaux, 84 maisons de soins de longue durée et 21 centres de soins communautaires, ainsi que de nombreuses maisons de retraite. Nombre des membres du personnel de ces établissements utilisent les transports en commun pour se rendre chaque jour au travail.

Toutefois, dans les cas où les parties se trouveraient dans une impasse de la négociation collective, les questions en suspens seraient résolues suivant un processus équitable et neutre de tiers : l'arbitrage exécutoire des intérêts.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I'm glad the member for Nickel Belt made the comments that she did, because I was sitting here listening to the debate and I couldn't believe what I was hearing from the member from York—from York wherever. York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** You weren't listening.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Yes, I was listening very carefully, but I couldn't believe what I was hearing: that there are some people in Ontario who matter more than other people in Ontario.

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** That's not what he said.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** That's exactly what he said. He said that in Toronto we don't need—

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: That is not exactly what I said.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** That's not a point of order, but thank you very much.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It is exactly what he said. Of course, the people in the House who were listening heard him say it. He said that there are some people in Ontario who need public transit and there are other people in Ontario who don't need public transit. My goodness, you've been drinking too much of the Kool-Aid. You really have been. When you start making statements like that, you're just out of control, as your party is also out of control.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Well, you know, the member over there and the other member like to quote numbers. That's interesting. They say the vote at city council was 28 to 17. Well, let's see now: 17 members, roughly 60,000 people they represent, comes to a million Torontonians who don't agree. How many people did you say: 2.5 million? So that's almost 40% of them who don't agree, and their elected officials voted for the situation—against it. So those numbers don't add up.

I really appreciate the member who added a human face to it and stopped and helped that elderly lady at that bus stop and blamed the poor drivers because they were on strike and didn't pick her up. That was a low blow. You can do better than that. Did you actually know her, or did she actually tap on the window? Could we have her name? I'd like to hear if the story is true. And secondly—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I'd ask the member to withdraw that.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I withdraw it.

Second, he stands up and talks about all the people in his riding. Well, how many of those million people who supported their representatives live in his riding? And he mentioned TTC drivers who live in his riding. I'd like to talk to them after and see if they agree with your comments about how they're all happy and everybody's happy and they're making lots of money and they'll never have to go on strike again because an arbitrator is going to rule in their favour all the time—great deal. You guys are getting a great deal. I don't know what planet this member is on, but it isn't this one.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member for York West has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Soon we're going to find out where these guys are going to stand, and their vote is going to be recorded. It is appalling, completely appalling, that some members would twist some words to suit their idiotic political agendas—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Excuse me. I'll have to ask the member to withdraw that, please.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I'll withdraw—with no logic whatsoever. There is no comparison between 2.5 million and a million. That was not the reference. The intention was to make a comparison between Toronto's 2.5 million people—you can say no. You can change that. You can say it's Hamilton, Ottawa, Nickel Belt. Toronto is 2.5 million people, surrounded by another three million people, and that is the difference. If we can't see that, that is very unfortunate. That is very unfortunate.

The thing is this: The city of Toronto has already met with the bargaining people, with the minister and with other interested agents. They couldn't come to an agreement. They made a request. We are dealing with the request. We are debating it. It's going to go to committee. Let's find out what the public is going to say. Let's see what the city of Toronto is going to say. Let's see what the mayor of Toronto is going to say. I want to see where the Conservatives are going to stand on that, when their mayor—it's not our mayor; it's their mayor. Let's see what they're going to say.

For me, I think for this side here, we see it as an important issue. We have responded, and we hope that when it comes, we'll be solid enough that we'll decide once and for all and declare the TTC an essential service, as the mayor of Toronto has requested.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you to all members. I now declare that, it being just after 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1802.*

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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
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No. 87

N° 87

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)****Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)****Tuesday 1 March 2011****Mardi 1<sup>er</sup> mars 2011**Speaker  
Honourable Steve PetersPrésident  
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Deborah Deller

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Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 March 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1<sup>er</sup> mars 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Buddhist prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### HEALTH PROTECTION AND PROMOTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION ET LA PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 22, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 141, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act / Projet de loi 141, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** We're resuming the debate from my speech last Tuesday, and it's amazing that—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** You're a stalwart man, Clark.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Absolutely. Thank you for your thunderous applause.

We're here to talk about Bill 141, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act. I think it was the member for Thornhill actually who mentioned the naming of bills by this government. I think one of the bills was called the Good Government Act, which was a bill to amend a whole bunch of administrative things. Your bill namer must have been out. I think the person who names your bills must have been working on the Premier's PowerPoint presentation that he's giving all over the province, because the name of this bill is a bit bland compared to some that you have put forward.

As we were talking about it, the chief medical officer of health, Dr. King's, report is really what spurred this on from the H1N1 issues that arose throughout the province. And as I mentioned last Tuesday, during this period I was in the municipal sector—it's funny that we're here during the Good Roads Conference talking about Bill 141. I take my mind back to my days as CAO—my short tenure as

CAO—of the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, and this was an issue that we discussed at great length during that time.

As many of you know, municipalities have emergency plans. We actually did a tabletop exercise about the pandemic. Wayne Shields from our fire department exercised a tabletop about what would have happened if H1N1 hit our municipality to the same degree as we thought the pandemic was going to hit. It tried to really challenge us as a municipality to rally what were the most important services and what was required by the municipality to run. I found that places, at least in my jurisdiction, at least in Leeds–Grenville, in eastern Ontario, were very conscious of emergency preparedness. So when the whole discussion of H1N1 took place, we rallied together. We worked with our local health unit. I think I mentioned last Tuesday, in my initial five or six minutes, that we didn't have the region-jumping that was experienced here in the GTA, in the 416 and the 905. We didn't have that situation. Yes, there was some confusion in the early days, and I'll talk about that as part of my address this morning.

I think it goes back to the ice storm, back to 1998, when that hit in my community, in my riding. We rallied around and worked together to try to help each other. So when I was at Good Roads last night and I talked about how I can't stay up late and maybe I can't go to as many hospitality rooms as I wanted to—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Just a few more.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** No—and I'm being serious. I may have gone to one or two more, but I had to come here and speak at 9 o'clock. I told them the subject; I told them it was Bill 141, and the fact that this was going to give medical officers of health expanded powers to use facilities. And you know what they said? They said, "We thought that was already in place," because when we had the ice storm in 1998 we all worked together. We opened up a Legion if we needed to. We opened up a school if we needed to. We worked together. We moved generators when they needed to be moved. We worked to get power lines when they needed to be moved.

I wasn't actually a part—my wife was a reporter up until my election as an MPP a year ago. In fact, my anniversary, just so you know, is Friday. I just wanted you to know that. When the ice storm hit, my wife, Deanna, was a reporter working for the Recorder and Times. She was out and I was home with the kids, and I think I mentioned last Tuesday the fact that the kids ate

steak and eggs for four or five days during the week of the ice storm.

Again, what happened was we rallied together, and I think what happened to us in 1998 helped us plan for what happened with the health unit and working with H1N1. I know that as a municipal official I talked about the tabletop exercise that we had done. I remember quite vividly as a chief administrative officer our weekly calls with the health unit to understand where they were with their planning in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville.

When I go back and look at Dr. King and her recommendations, the one thing that rings clear is what's not in this bill, and the things that I talked about earlier, where people expect that you can just mobilize and use a Legion or a municipal centre when we want to, or that if we need to open up a vaccination centre, we'd be able to do so. But what's not there—and I remember the paragraph that I quoted last week from Dr. King, where she basically talked about the issues, the fact that they underestimated the logistics of organizing and delivering this campaign. I think we've heard that—the issues I mentioned before, of the disturbing lineups that took place in many communities, the fact that there were, as Dr. King talked about, different plans unfolding in different communities, a different level of service depending on where you lived in the province.

But the issue that she talks about that's not here—and I'll quote it. It says, "That last point is critical." Do you know what she's talking about when she talks about, "That last point is critical"? She's talking about the need for an immunization program, and her quote is, "In an era where there is much talk about electronic health systems and patient records, we do not have in this province the capacity to electronically manage and track our immunization programs." This is the Panorama program that's been in the works since SARS, and it's something that I think needs to be addressed.

I was in Oakville three weeks ago for the Premier's PowerPoint presentation. I think he quoted at one point that they had a big family and they didn't have all the gadgets that maybe we have now, and the fact that he was the remote. Everybody laughed—and I think he did it yesterday at the ROMA conference. You know, he might even be the remote in October; he might be the cause of the channel being changed on the political parties come October 6. But his discussion about electronics and the quote from Dr. King about the problems with electronic immunization—it almost made me think that we've got this backwards, that we should have included something like that in this bill. I hope that during public hearings we'll have an opportunity to talk about that, about the need for that immunization record, the fact that Dr. King felt that it was such a critical piece of the puzzle that wasn't included.

0910

But I don't think that we have such great confidence in electronics, even in this Legislative Assembly. The Premier mentions the use of cellphones in classrooms. Dr. King talks about the need for electronic records. The

way that we operate—we talk about kids using cellphones in classrooms, and technology; I can't even use one of these in the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Good.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I don't think it is good.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Put it away.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** What do you mean, "Put it away"?

**Interjection:** It's a prop.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I figured that the Sergeant-at-Arms would come and grab it from me by now.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Put it where the moon don't shine.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I just think that when we talk about electronic records and we talk about cellphones in classrooms and we talk about making electronics work to our advantage—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** They would probably ban them; I think they want to ban them.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Maybe they will. But I believe that there's a grave mistake in this bill by not including Panorama, by not taking what Dr. King calls a critical point to be added to the bill.

In my own community, as I said, in Leeds–Grenville, we didn't experience the issues that they had in the GTA. We didn't have the problems. In fact, there's a story in one of the local papers, when I did the research—it was actually written by my wife before she left the paper, when she was the health reporter, so it's nice that I get to quote from Deanna's story today—not that she cares.

In Leeds and Grenville they did have some problems with lineups at first. They did have, as many areas did, a higher number of young children, people in poorer health and expectant mothers in the first two days of the immunization. In our jurisdiction, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit revamped its system. What we did was we started a numbering system which allowed for a greater number of people to be served in each clinic. I remember my wife and I going to the clinic that was held at the Brockville Memorial centre. Using that numbering system, we got in and out very quickly. They mobilized as many nurses as they could; they had some retired nurses working. In fact, my wife was immunized by a retired nurse—very nice. I had a younger nurse, and I got the sense that she wasn't necessarily a Progressive Conservative supporter, because she stuck me pretty good. I guess I should realize that when I'm going to a clinic I shouldn't necessarily open up and let them know what I do for a living, because it was—

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** What is it you do for a living?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** What is it that I do for a living? That's right; good idea.

The total in our jurisdiction—I wanted to give you some of the percentages to give you a flavour how successful the program was: We had a total of almost 55,000 residents, including a large number of children, get the vaccination, out of a population of 170,000. That's not just my riding; that's part of the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington's riding as well, because we share that. So in three months' worth of clinics

we had two people with H1N1 who passed away; a total of 120 cases were confirmed; and 41 people had to be hospitalized. But again, as I said earlier, from our experience with the ice storm we had a lot of co-operation between municipalities, community organizations, volunteer agencies, school boards and the police. In the end, 32% of the population were immunized, and the cost totalled \$828,000.

We used quite a lot of phone information, which again goes back to my discussion on—Mr. Prue, I'll just hold it up quickly. We used a lot of technology. The website had between 6,000 and 8,000 hits per day. I know that when I was in the municipal sector, we drove people to that website all the way along.

We put in place many things that we've got in place here. As many of you know, as you come into the galleries, you've got a hand sanitizer, those automatic dispensers that are all around. I notice that the one up on the fourth floor coming into the public gallery is empty, so we need to have a little more diligence in making sure those are filled.

Many municipalities, many public sector agencies, many community groups took the information that health units gave them and put it into practice. They put the notices up in their community centres. They worked together, group to group. I'm proud that we didn't have those same issues, and I can respect that there were a number of issues on other levels, things that Dr. King talked about, those different levels of service in different communities.

So I hope that as we move forward in the second reading debate and going through into committee, that we'll consider the electronic side of it, the things that Dr. King said weren't included—the critical point, like Panorama. I know that our deputy leader on this side of the House spoke in her hour lead about the same concern. I know other members in this House have expressed the same concern as those members.

As we move forward, I hope that we will have second reading. I wanted to give some of my own comments about eastern Ontario because I think the ice storm was a very real opportunity for us to mobilize. I think emergency preparedness, working with the health unit, is very important. Many people think that this is something that's already in place. But I hope, as we move forward, we'll listen on the electronic imaging and records side.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Let's talk about these damned BlackBerrys and these other electronic devices.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I like them.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I have no doubt that the member likes them. It's obvious that a few other people here like them because, rather than listening to or participating in the debate, they've got their hands down at their laps, looking at Lord knows what on their BlackBerrys. You know, for the life of me, it doesn't do anything to add to the debate or the discourse in here; it detracts from it. These are toys, and I know darned well because I've

looked over enough shoulders to know darned well that it's not people doing business; it's people playing thumb volleyball, if you will, with these damned BlackBerrys that have no business in a Legislature, the focus of which should be on debate.

Lord knows there's little enough of that that goes on in here. When you have a member like this member, the member from Leeds–Grenville, who, to his credit, after a relatively short period of time here, demonstrates an ability to get up on his feet and carry a 20-minute commentary on a bill like this without frequent reference to notes, never mind reading the darned speech, people should be listening to him.

I did. I found his comments informative and interesting. People who were playing with their BlackBerrys weren't doing that. People who were playing with their BlackBerrys were doing anything but listening to the member for Leeds–Grenville. We've got a long-standing tradition, though chairs have been reasonably lax about it—reasonably, not unreasonably so—of not referring profusely or at length to notes. In other words, people aren't supposed to read speeches. That's designed to achieve a number of goals. Some of them are traditional; all of them valid.

BlackBerrys do not add to the discourse here in the chamber, or—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I am going to comment on what the member from Leeds–Grenville said. I actually would like to thank him for his remarks, and I do agree with the member from Welland that they were quite informative, because I agree with the point that the member was making about what the public thinks.

0920

In fact, two of the things that are in Bill 141, the public believes already happen. The first is the power for the chief medical officer of health to take over public facilities in times of a health emergency. I think the public tends to assume that the chief medical officer of health already has that. In fact, the only thing the chief medical officer of health has is the very narrow power to take over facilities specifically to create isolation wards. But we know from the H1N1 experience that there's a broader need than that. Perhaps it's an immunization centre; perhaps it's an urgent treatment centre where we can direct people with something like H1N1 to go, rather than to the standard emergency room.

The other thing that people tend to assume is that because the chief medical officer of health is called "chief," she has the power to issue directives to the other medical officers of health. That's simply not true. The way the legislation is currently structured, each local one is an independent operator, and as we saw with both SARS and H1N1, there's a need for the chief medical officer of health in a province-wide situation to provide some coordinating directives. So thank you for pointing that out.

With respect to Panorama, it's a huge frustration, and it's the frustration of trying to get 10 provinces all on the same page. We share your frustration.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's been a pleasure to listen to the member, in the brief time he has been here, from Leeds–Grenville. But the experience that he spoke of is quite relevant to the discussion here on this Health Protection and Promotion Act.

I'm always amazed that there is a former medical officer of health here from Oak Ridges–Markham, I believe it is, who was a medical officer of health for York region, I believe—a wonderful person, from everything I've heard. Why isn't she the Minister of Health, one would ask? She would be the logical one. Why isn't she taking the lead on this? She knows of what she speaks.

Nonetheless, he mentioned the Panorama thing, and this is the problem I find, really. The money that's coming from Ottawa for health care for the wait time strategy is never mentioned, nor have they ever thanked Stephen Harper for that. One thing: Panorama is a national program and it feeds into Canada Health Info-way, which is the infrastructure for an integrated health information system nationally. In Ontario we spend a billion dollars on consultants at eHealth. The wasted money is tragic. Is health care any better under Premier McGuinty?

Look at the first three pages in your clippings today, about retirement homes facing stricter rules. It goes on to say, "France Gélinas (Nickel Belt) said the proposed rules sound as though Ontario is creating a 'parallel for-profit' long-term care system." I think she's on to something. I'm not making this up. Another one: "Hospital Bed Found for GTA Man." This is a person stranded in the United States for days on end, a 67-year-old with heart issues. They finally, after pressure from the Star—here's another one, a Star investigation: "Pay \$1,800 a Day or Get Out" of the hospital, an elderly woman was told. "A social worker at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre told Cornacchia her mother could be billed \$1,800 a day...." Now, that question was raised last week—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to the member from Leeds–Grenville and I would like to tell you that I understood everything he was trying to say, but every time he spoke, he kept making use of his prop. I must admit I found it rather disconcerting because (a) we're not supposed to use props in this place, and (b) he kept talking about the need to constantly go to the website. I have to agree with my colleague from Welland. We have had this debate many times in this House and we have had this debate many times in committee about whether or not BlackBerrys and other devices should be used in this House.

It has always been the position of this House, of the Speaker, that they ought not to be here. So I'm wonder-

ing; perhaps he can tell us in his rebuttal why he finds it necessary to bring such a device, contrary to the rules and procedures of the House. Now, I'm not naive. I can look around and see at least three or four members using their BlackBerrys as I am speaking. Again, I wonder: Is this what we are supposed to be doing here? We are supposed to be listening to each other's speeches. We are supposed to be listening to what people have to say. We are supposed to be giving some sober thought to the bills that are before us.

I think the time has come when all members of the House should do away with these toys, as my friend from Welland said, in the House and that they should be doing what we are sent here to do; that is, to listen to each other, to speak to each other and to make rules and regulations for the people of Ontario, giving real thought to it and not being sidetracked by some toy in our possession.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Leeds–Grenville has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to thank the member for Welland, the member for Guelph, the member for Durham and the member for Beaches–East York.

**Interjection:** Would you like a BlackBerry?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I've got a BlackBerry. I've got one in my pocket.

I just want to thank you very much. I wanted to give a few comments from my own municipal experience relative to what we faced during the H1N1 issue, but I did want to highlight not just Dr. King's recommendation that the critical piece that's not in this bill is the fact that we don't have an electronic immunization record—and I wanted to do it in conjunction with some of the electronic things that have been in this House.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** eHealth was a waste of money.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** We've talked about the billion-dollar boondoggle of eHealth and how much money was wasted from front-line health care.

The Premier has mused about how he feels that a BlackBerry would be a very useful tool for a young person in a school, yet, as my New Democrat friends talk about it, it's not something that we're allowed to use here, which is crazy. To again go back to my municipal career, the BlackBerry that I had, for my New Democratic friends, also had a two-way radio, so I could call the firefighters on the scene or the public works crew that was dealing with an issue. I found it was a very useful electronic tool.

If I'm to leave anything in this debate this morning, other than a lack of caffeine in my brain, it's to emphasize Dr. King's recommendations that if we are going to move forward with this bill, we should seriously consider putting some emphasis on the immunization records—the things that aren't included in Bill 141.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I should indicate that the New Democrats are quite prepared to see this bill receive second reading and then go on to committee.

Our health critic, the member for Nickel Belt, has been very clear about the concerns that she has on behalf of the NDP; that is, that the provisions in section 3 of the bill are in some respects the War Measures Act of medical officers of health in that they allow the Ontario chief medical officer of health, the provincial medical officer of health, to override local or regional medical officers of health. Ms. Gélinas, the member for Nickel Belt and the NDP health critic, has expressed concern that that may not always be a wise direction, a wise course, a wise route to take, because what it does is it denies the unique nature of so many regional matters in terms of the ability of a regional medical officer of health to rally his or her health community to respond to an issue; understanding the issue from a regional or local level; and the fact that even in a pandemic, even in a provincial or national or international crisis, there could well be regional peculiarities, idiosyncrasies or specific characteristics that would make it preferable that local medical officers of health design the response to the particular issue.

So our health critic, the member for Nickel Belt, is very much eager to see this bill go to committee. Should the bill go to a second reading vote today, New Democrats will be using our powers under the rules, under the standing orders, to force the bill to committee, because it would be interesting and very important to hear from medical officers of health as to whether or not the concern about this War Measures Act-style provision is widespread or whether it's restricted to one or two medical officers of health, regional ones, and whether or not it can be accommodated.

0930

There was some reference made in the course of this morning's debate to the notorious Liberal eHealth scandal, the one that took out George Smitherman and also undoubtedly played the largest role in defeating him for his mayoralty bid, and I notice that the herpetoid Sarah Kramer has reappeared. "Herpetoid" is as appropriate an adjective as one could find to describe Ms. Kramer, because she keeps coming back, however unwanted she is. I find that here we are; she's discovered again. Sarah Kramer has a new job in California, 3,000 miles away. She's risen from the ashes of scandal. It wasn't enough to do in George Smitherman; she's not, I guess—what's his name?—Jerry Brown, another revived or resurrected phoenix-like politician, without his rock-and-roll mistress this time.

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, she was. He was doing fine in his day.

So now she's going to do a number on poor phoenix-like Jerry Brown. When I read that in this morning's paper—where's the member for Leeds–Grenville and his technology when you need him? Don't these people have Google? Somehow, Sarah Kramer—and there's no suggestion she's using a pseudonym. There's no suggestion that she's had a nose job and is wearing those glasses with the big nose and the bushy moustache, like the Groucho Marx stuff, to disguise herself. There's no

suggestion that she's impersonating somebody else. She hasn't stolen Premier McGuinty's identity; she isn't parading as a McGuinty—although of course they're closely connected.

Don't those people have Google? Google Sarah Kramer—that's Kramer with a "K"—and you have reams and reams and reams of dope on this woman; bad dope. Hell's bells: runaway spending by consultants, a \$317,000 severance package and \$1 billion blown in the Smitherman eHealth scandal, and Kramer was the operator; she drove the getaway car. She was, for all intents and purposes and in many respects, the brains behind the operation. You'd think—what's that old line about, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me"? I've heard, "Fool me three times"—there's an answer to that one that I can't recall at the moment. I find it remarkable that this woman can—how did she get into the States? You would think—my colleague from Beaches–East York used to be an immigration officer. Perhaps when he has 20 minutes to address this matter he could comment on this. Heck, I go over to Niagara Falls, New York, or Buffalo and I've got to show them my passport and tell them why I'm going there and what I do for a living. I'm just in my 15-year-old pickup truck and dressed simply. I haven't got the crown jewels with me in a leather satchel. Ms. Kramer should be carrying, in view of how much severance she got, \$317,000—

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Buy a new car. Support Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Ms. Pupatello, see, doesn't have the confidence in the North American auto industry that I do. I drive a Chevy S-10 pickup. I bought it in 1994. It's got hundreds of thousands of clicks on it now, and she wants me to buy a new one. I say no. I'm proud of my General Motors product, because it's good for 300,000 or 400,000 kilometres. My Chevy pickup is a testament to the quality of manufacturing—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask the member to keep his remarks relevant to the bill under discussion.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker.

My Chevy S-10 was built right here in Canada and the United States, bits and pieces and parts—good junk. But I suspect that the transmission plant, as it used to exist in St. Catharines—except we revived that plant as well.

So here we are with, as I say, Sarah Kramer. During the course of the revelations around the Smitherman Liberal eHealth scandal, it was revealed that Kramer gave a speech that cost \$25,000 to write. In other words, here she is, high-priced help, and she's paying some hanger-on 25 Gs to write a speech. How long is a speech? Well, here, speeches can go on forever, but as we all know, in the context that she was likely to give it, the usual speech is, oh, 20 minutes long. There are any number of first-year community college or university students who would have no trouble drafting it. There's a whole pile of skilled people working for substandard wages as support staff—at least in the Liberal and Tory

ranks, because our staff are unionized, the NDP staff—who write these speeches. They write them for \$25,000 a year.

So there's Ms. Kramer giving \$25,000 speeches that she's paying for on the taxpayers' tab and giving out \$16 million in contracts without competitive bidding: \$16 million of taxpayers' money. That's huge. People go to jail for far less; at least they ought to. Wow. Sixteen million dollars in contracts is what Ms. Kramer granted without competitive bidding.

I don't know what's going on with folks in California. The governor had a reputation for some peculiar ingestions back in his day. Maybe he's back on the pipe; I don't know. But the fact that Ms. Kramer could find herself a job anywhere in the world other than—well, heck, if you had a Tim Hortons or McDonald's franchise, you wouldn't hire her. Lord knows, if you can't trust her with \$16 million, how can you trust her with chump change?

So that's that. I wanted to raise that and just comment on it, especially in the context of it being raised, as you heard, in the course of the debate here this morning.

I have some sympathy with the argument of the member for Nickel Belt around the provisions in section 3 of this bill, these amendments to the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Of course, the member for Nickel Belt comes from the very unique real-world experience of northern Ontario, where a region is huge. A regional medical officer of health has responsibility for geographic turf that's larger than many countries in the world.

It was interesting because this is the same member for Nickel Belt who, yesterday, was tearing a strip off the sinister Liberals for their attack on working women and men by virtue of their—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Don't apologize, Ms. Albanese; it's okay—by virtue of their attack on working women and men in the bill that prohibits TTC workers from exercising their right to withdraw their labour.

The member for Nickel Belt, again, yesterday was saying to these folks here on the other side, on the government side, that they don't get it. Somehow they think that the province of Ontario begins and ends at the intersection of Yonge and Bloor. Well, I know better than that because, you see, I come from down Welland riding. I come from communities like Wainfleet and Port Colborne and Welland and Thorold and Pelham and St. Catharines and Merriton and Crowland—old Crowland, now part of Welland.

0940

Heck, my colleague for Beaches–East York is a Torontonionian, in the sense of a greater Torontonionian, but he knows a heck of a lot better than to suggest that the province of Ontario begins and ends at the intersection of Yonge and Bloor; he knows that darned well. And he also knows that a Toronto-focused model can't necessarily be applied cookie-cutter style to other parts of Ontario, especially when you witness the vast, vast differences in lifestyle, culture and distances alone—

distances alone—and climate, dealing with an issue in the north, in the peak—in the real north.

When I was a kid, I used to think—we never went on vacations, because we were just a working-class family, but there were other young kids whom I went to school with, and their families would go on vacation. I'd say, "Where are you going?" and they'd say, "We're going up north." That meant places like Bracebridge or Huntsville or Peterborough. So for the longest time I thought that was the north. I'd never been there. I wasn't there until I was a teenager. But I thought Huntsville must be the north. Well, I soon learned that, heck, even North Bay is only just the beginning of the north—and I like North Bay, by the way. North Bay is a very fascinating town, with its history and its location on the lake.

But you go to the real north—not this little cottager north, but up to the Timmins–James Bay riding or the Kenora–Rainy River riding—and you go to the north of those ridings, you go along the James Bay–Hudson Bay coast, and you're in a different country, never mind the province of Ontario. The sensibilities and sensitivities of Torontonians simply have no relationship whatsoever to the reality of living in those communities, those isolated communities, those impoverished communities, those barren communities, those communities where people struggle on a daily basis with issues that people in Toronto can't even begin to imagine. As a matter of fact, when you talk about health crises, surely there's the unrecognized—at least by southerners—health crises of those small communities in northern Ontario that relate to the despair of young people, that relate to addictions in supposed dry communities, where the toxin of choice then becomes glue or aerosols or those types of solvent-sniffing ingestion.

This is just dramatic, horrifying stuff, yet we see so little reference made to it by downtown Toronto medical-officer-of-health types, and a failure to understand that their provincial responsibility, be it of the medical officer of health or of the government of the province of Ontario, extends beyond Bracebridge or Huntsville—very nice parts of the world as well, but certainly not even beginning to be representative of what constitutes the vastness of Ontario.

I have no idea, and I leave it to the NDP health critic, the member from Nickel Belt, to determine, as a member of the committee's subcommittee, how many people would elect to appear before the committee. There could in fact be modest interest or marginal interest in this bill at committee, and if that's the case, then so be it. But the bill should proceed to committee. The committee should be allowed to set its own agenda, based on the amount of interest or demand there is for appearances before the committee. And then, whether it takes a little bit of time or a little longer time, it should be referring the bill back to the House and then we'll respond in due course, based on what has been learned at committee and what, if any, amendments have been put forward either by the government or the two opposition parties, and the extent to which they have been accepted and the extent to which

the bill has been modified or improved or made acceptable.

So let's make it very, very clear that when the NDP supports this bill on second reading, it's in principle only. We want to be very, very clear—and it's in the interest of getting the bill to committee, because of course it's pretty difficult to say, "Well, we want the bill to go to committee but we're not going to support the bill in principle for the purpose of getting it to committee." So we want to be very clear that we're supporting it in principle, with the goal in mind of getting it to committee. Our support on second reading does not dictate or in any way confirm or warn that there will be similar support on third reading, when the bill is put forward here in the House for its third and final reading. Not by a long shot.

One of the remarkable things—and we've all witnessed here the period, the era of emergency czars. I remember that Julian Fantino was the flavour of the month there for a while. He was the province's emergency czar for a few moments, and then he was the commissioner of the OPP. Then, of course, he became Greg Sorbara's best ex-friend when—

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, the two were like this, right?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** With friends like that.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Yes; it was like, "Hey." They were tight. As a matter of fact, there was some pillow talk, because we learned that Mr. Sorbara, the member for Vaughan, had been trying to seduce Mr. Fantino—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Ugh.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Perish the thought, Mr. Barrett.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Perish the thought.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Well, wait a minute; he's yours now, Mr. Barrett. Don't disparage Fantino. Quite frankly, you're welcome to him. We learned that the member—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Your riding is welcome to him.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Mr. Barrett notes.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Put that in Hansard.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** And it is.

The member for Vaughan was seducing Mr. Fantino, but then learned that Mr. Fantino was two-timing the Liberals. Mr. Fantino was stepping out on them with the Tories.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** He's a swinger, is that what you're saying?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Ms. Pupatello notes.

So here we've got this bizarre scenario of a mature man who obviously is still feeling his oats. The imagination is just running rampant now as to the potential images that I can describe. Thank goodness we're nearing the end of this, because Mr. Fantino is on his own. He's on his own now. But who knows?

Just as we wrap up, when we look at all this cuckolding that's been going on—Liberals and Tories—let's look at it this way: The Liberals got Sarah Thomson; the Tories got Rocco Rossi. In tennis, they call that love-

love, don't they? I don't think either of them are ahead, by any stretch of the imagination.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Somewhere in that 20 minutes there was an issue raised that had to do with Bill 141, so I will confine my comments to that.

The member talked about, in section 3, the proposed power of the chief medical officer of health to issue directives, and raised a concern that this would be one-size-fits-all. I want to assure him that that is absolutely not the case. First of all, the bill makes it quite clear that directives can be issued to any or all boards. That means that, in fact, if a health emergency affects a narrow area or just a part of the province, you can issue the directive in just that part of the province.

But the member has raised the issue of whether a reasonable response in the north may be different than a reasonable response in the GTA. Well, the chief medical officer of health, Dr. King, fully recognizes that a reasonable response might be different in different parts of the province. There is nothing in the bill that says she has to tell everybody to do the exact same thing. If you think about H1N1, where there were priority populations, you might look at the north and say, "But in the north, which is immense, you're going into a community and you're just going to vaccinate on that one day." Well, of course you're going to vaccinate everybody in that small community who you can get out. You're going to target the people who are high-priority, but you're not going to say, "Well, in Toronto we're only giving it to this kind of people this week," so the rest of the people in that northern community can't have it. That would be idiocy.

We understand that within the concept of coordination there may be different approaches fine-tuned for different areas of the province. That's—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments?

0950

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to comment on the speech by the member from Welland on Bill 141, which is the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act, 2010. Certainly, the member from Welland was entertaining, particularly with his tennis comments. He did go on at length and at times mentioned the bill, and he did actually refer to the north. I did want to bring that into my couple of minutes of comments, because he specifically mentioned Huntsville. We have a page from Huntsville right now, Sadie Honderich, and her parents, Jamie Honderich and Pam Carnochan, are here in the members' gallery today. I'm not sure whether he meant to refer to them, but I'd like to welcome them to Queen's Park today and I look forward to meeting them in a couple of minutes.

Bill 141 is a response to the H1N1 outbreak and it's acting on the recommendations of the chief medical officer of health, Dr. King, and the lessons learned from that outbreak. Our party will be supporting, in principle,

the bill, as the member from Welland suggested, so that it will go to committee and can be further improved.

But just going back to his comments about the north, he talked about how the north is different. Of course, the OGRA/ROMA conference is going on right now. North of Huntsville we have some municipalities, and when I was there last night at a reception, one of the issues they wanted to talk to me about was health care, particularly in the Burk's Falls area, and how they feel they aren't getting the primary care that they need. That was one of the issues brought up just last night.

Going further north, often you will hear, if you travel around the north, that they don't like the fact that the decision-making happens in Toronto. They feel it's Toronto-centred decision-making that doesn't recognize the differences in the north.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently, as I always do, to the member from Welland. It takes me back to one of my very first weeks here as a brand new MPP, having just been elected in a by-election. I was told to come up and speak for an hour to a bill. After about 55 minutes, I ran out of things to say and I sat down. The member from Welland wisely told me there, "You could have filled up an extra five minutes. You could have said almost anything." Well, I listened to him today and he did.

This was absolutely amazing to me, because what he wanted to convey, I honestly believe, is that there may be some difficulty with section 3 of the bill. That's what he wanted to convey. He wanted to say that medical officers of health in disparate places around this province often have to deal with very different issues and ought to be listened to very carefully for local preference. I think that's what he was trying to say. But in and amongst all of those, he wove such an interesting speech. He talked about Ms. Kramer and what she's doing down at UCLA. He talked about his S-10 Chevy and how he still likes to drive it and how he can still get parts made in Ontario. He talked about Julian Fantino, the newly minted MP from Vaughan. And he closed off the entire speech talking about that great tennis duo Rossi and Thomson.

So I want to commend him. He made what might have been a rather boring topic into a very interesting speech, and he did the whole thing without a BlackBerry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** As well, I listened to the member from Welland speaking, and I remember when I got elected in 2003. I was sitting on that side and sitting close to the member from Welland. He gave me the same advice and told me what I'm supposed to do when I stand up, how I can speak and not use notes and talk about many different things to keep the topic interesting and keep people listening.

I listened to him today for the last 20 minutes, and I believe he spoke almost 80% about everything. He was shooting in different directions: against the Conservatives, the Liberals, many different parts of the province of

Ontario, many different leaders, different jobs, different things. I guess maybe he kept it interesting for the last 20 minutes, but in the end I believe the member spoke about some very important things, like this bill, which I believe his party and himself are going to support in principle on one condition: that the bill goes to the committee to listen to many different stakeholders from across the province of Ontario.

I want to assure the member, as we always do on this side of the House when we introduce a bill and pass it at first and second reading, that we send it to the committee because we're always interested to listen to many different stakeholders from across the province of Ontario so they can give us an idea of how we can strengthen our ability to support Bill 141, which I believe is a very important bill for all of us in the province of Ontario, especially in emergency times.

As you know, when we had those emergency times a few months back, different health units across the province of Ontario acted differently. That's why I believe the chief medical officer should get some kind of supportive power to be able to oversee all the activities across the province, including the north, the south and the east.

My colleague the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Health mentioned something very important: The chief medical officer should oversee everything that goes on in the province of Ontario, including the north.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Welland has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm particularly interested in the comments made by the member for Guelph. Here she is monitoring the progress of this bill as a responsible PA, parliamentary assistant, and I respect that. She clearly is a person of faith. She made that clear in her comments in response to my modest contribution to this debate, a mere 20 minutes. She's a person of faith, and my faith was shattered years ago.

She responds by saying, "Well, of course it wouldn't happen that way." She suggests, perhaps, that I'm a cynic. She suggests that I'm mistrustful of this government, or governments in general. I say, in fact that's what she's suggesting, those are valid observations. We'll deal with this in the course of committee. Our member for Nickel Belt will ask the probing questions and she'll be drilling down and talking to people who are appearing, giving commentary on the bill to the committee, and we'll see how it unfolds.

I'm prepared to be labelled a cynic and mistrustful. I can live with that; I've got big enough shoulders to carry that burden. All I say is this: From time to time, a little more cynicism around here might be a little more useful. I don't pretend to know what goes on in the government caucus room but I do have a reasonably good idea—I read the Toronto Star, among other things—that while the cynicism may be disguised in the chamber, it certainly reigns from time to time in the government caucus room.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** You called for further debate. We're not getting a speech from the government side. I question that. This legislation is very important to debate before the reality of the arrival of the next epidemic, the next pandemic. There will be considerable discussion once the next pandemic arises, and for that reason it is so important for government members to continue the debate. There are some good speakers on the other side. They have access to information that we in the opposition and the third party may not be privy to, and I regret that the rotation didn't continue because this issue is very important. Disease prevention is very important. Health promotion is very important.

1000

The government recognized that, and in 2005 they created a Ministry of Health Promotion. They created a Minister of Health Promotion. I don't know what the involvement of that minister is in these amendments to the Health Protection and Promotion Act. I do see that the Minister of Health Promotion is not shepherding this piece of legislation, which is titled the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act. I question that. It seemed like a good idea at the time to set up a Ministry of Health Promotion. Maybe that one is going to go the way of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, something else that the government side—it seemed to be a good idea at the time but no longer exists as a separate ministry.

In my 20 minutes—in my 18 minutes now—I want to talk a little bit more about disease prevention and health promotion, health protection. First, I'll talk a bit about H1N1. Regrettably, in some quarters, that's referred to as "swine flu." The CBC has been referring to it as swine flu, and that had a devastating impact at the time on Canada's hog industry. We have to be very careful when we talk about things like swine flu—or bird flu, for that matter, the H5N1.

I want to talk a little bit about world population—the population of humans. I cannot even begin to guess what the world population of bacteria and viruses would be. There was reference to the War Measures Act. There is an ongoing war around the planet between human beings, other animals—whether it be monkey, swine—and, of course, viruses and bacteria. This particular piece of legislation will not win that war, but the reason we support it is because it will go somewhat toward better enabling us to either ameliorate some of the impacts or perhaps prevent some of the impacts.

It's very important in a city like Toronto. Toronto has been identified as a hot spot in the world. We have a very large airport and a population comprised of people—to the credit of Toronto—from all over the world. That makes us the hot spot for any pandemic that would occur or be generated in so much of the rest of the world.

In supporting this bill, it's very important that it goes to committee. I think it's important for all of us in this House to be better informed about a pandemic. It's not something we deal with on a day-to-day basis, and as I indicated, regrettably, people rapidly become informed

essentially after the fact, after it has occurred and, with respect to H1N1, after it arrives in a city like Toronto.

So the legislation, Bill 141, the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act, 2011, and amendments to that bill—as I understand, when the legislation was written, it echoed many of the recommendations of Ontario's chief medical officer of health, Dr. Arlene King, and much of the focus seems to be on the last war. I don't know whether that's a good idea or not, but it does focus on what occurred in 2009 with the advent of H1N1. Dr. King brought out a report that was titled *The H1N1 Pandemic—How Ontario Fared*.

By and large, Ontario got through it not too badly off compared to other parts of the world, but the fact remains—and hence this legislation—that changes need to be made in our public health system. We need to be better prepared for the next pandemic. There will be one; we don't debate that. By and large, as I said, I understand we got off relatively easy—some people did die. But we need to examine how better to improve the system, take those mistakes and, through legislation, in this case, and regulation, see if we can do a better job next time.

As the title suggests, this is a debate couched, much of it, in terms of disease prevention, in terms of health promotion. I made mention that this government has a Ministry of Health Promotion, set up in 2005. That minister's name isn't on this bill. Again, for whatever reason, that occurred.

Oftentimes, it's these smaller ministries like that that kind of get thrown up, and then on the rare occasion that this government would even talk about cutting spending, it's the small ministries that get nailed. There's never any talk about cutting wasteful spending. The wasteful spending we see—and this was mentioned again this morning—is with respect to the eHealth scandal. That was \$1 billion. I can't remember the budget of the Ministry of Health Promotion, but there is an area where this government—if they're going to talk about cutting spending, I suggest they start talking about cutting wasteful spending. Take a look at some of those big-budget wasteful items, rather than kind of a knee-jerk response and either cutting important areas like health promotion and disease prevention or ignoring the issue and, it appears to me, ignoring that particular ministry.

Health promotion is very important. Disease prevention is very important. It's a proactive approach, something we do not see, necessarily, in the health industry, the health ministry, the illness industry or the ill health industry. It's a proactive approach. It doesn't receive the funding that it deserves, in my opinion. The funding, as we know, goes to the reactive approach, the illness treatment approach. I'm not sure what share of the health budget public health units and public health receive. I think it used to be something around 1%, and this is the area we're talking about today.

Why is this kind of health promotion legislation so important? Well, it's getting out in front. It's a focus on keeping people well, bringing in measures that prevent morbidity and mortality in the first place, prevent dis-

eases from occurring. I think of the old analogy of the ambulance and the cliff. Ambulances, and that kind of a very necessary approach, are expensive. When cars go off a cliff, you have an ambulance that will haul people out at the bottom of the cliff, provide that early treatment and get them into the hospital system emergency departments. With respect to health promotion, the whole idea is to prevent vehicles from going over that cliff in the first place; put some money in at the top of the cliff.

Much of health promotion—and it's very hard to measure. It's hard to evaluate or to determine if you are getting any results. It's based on information; it's based on education and public education and counselling and lifestyle changes.

We think so much of the highly visible efforts: washing one's hands, for example, sneezing into one's sleeve, something that is very, very important when we're talking about an issue of the next national or world pandemic. It seems fairly simple. There have been a lot of successes with this approach. I spent 20 years in the business focusing more on alcohol and other drugs with respect to education and information. We think of the good work that has been done as well with respect to diet and exercise, the impact that that can have on certain diseases; diabetes, for example. But again, does it get the credit it deserves? I suggest that it doesn't. That's why it's so important to keep pushing legislation like this. It's preventive. You never know to what extent it's going to work.

1010

In advocating disease prevention or in advocating promotion of health, when you have success, perhaps through safety, through workplace programs, that means that perhaps someone did not break their arm. So there's somebody walking around today without a broken arm, but you cannot evaluate that. You cannot pinpoint the reason why that person took certain measures, perhaps in the workplace or in the home, based on an education program or an information program. It indicates that they did not have a fall and that they did not break their arm, but it doesn't get that kind of attention because it's something that didn't happen.

I suppose that the other important side of this is disease prevention, something that this legislation is, in part, crafted to accomplish—again, so many strategies and tactics in this field. Essentially, the goal to reduce risk or, at minimum, to identify the risk, to ameliorate the risk—much of that revolves around early detection and early diagnosis, a very rapid assessment, referrals, trying to be prepared and to hit the ground running, and even the early onset of treatment, which obviously has a preventive approach. I think of—well, we would all think of immunization.

I get a flu shot every year. That was a program that our government brought in. I guess this would be—what?—10 or 11 years ago. Vitamin supplements have a big impact, in my view, on whether one gets a cold or not. Cholesterol tests and screening for cancer and things

like this are all very, very important—not necessarily on the treatment side of these continuums.

We have amendments here with the legislation—disease-prevention and health promotion-type legislation—to strengthen our public health system in advance of the next pandemic. It has taken us a couple of years to get to this point. Fortunately, we have not had a pandemic. I should knock on wood. I'm assuming we're going to get through this winter without any problems. This winter is not over. But everyone here realizes that it's not a question of whether there's going to be another pandemic or not; it's a question of when it will occur.

Since the early 1970s—and I know that our critic for health promotion, Christine Elliott, talked a bit about this—we've seen the emergence of something like 30 previously unknown diseases again associated with our old friends bacteria and viruses. These diseases wreaked havoc on our health care system, obviously, but also made a lot of people sick and killed people.

In 1977, there was the arrival of two different pandemics: Ebola and legionnaires' disease. We never heard about these things before. In 1989, there was hepatitis C; in 1996, a variant—and I can't pronounce this: Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. H5N1: H5 is the avian flu, the bird flu. That had a devastating impact on British Columbia's poultry industry. H5N1 was in 1997. And, of course, H1N1: I hate to give it the other moniker, swine flu, but that's probably the most recent example of an—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Excuse me. We have reached the time when we recess, and I'd like to—

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I'll sit down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Okay, good.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** This House stands recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** It's my pleasure to welcome my sister Dorothy, her husband and my brother-in-law, Ross, and my niece Brittney Gellately to the Legislature today. Welcome.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** On behalf of page Michael Church Carson, I'd like to introduce his mother, Elizabeth Church, his father, Neill Carson, and his grandparents, Mac and Barbra Carson. They're here today to watch the Legislature and, of course, to watch Michael.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to formally recognize page Sadie Honderich's parents, Jamie Honderich and Pam Carnochan from Huntsville, in the Legislature here today.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislative Assembly today three members from the Stone Mills township council in my riding: Clarence Kennedy, Todd Steele and Eric Smith.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further introductions?

From my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, I'd like to welcome Paul Van Vaerenbergh and Scott Woolley, who are here for the OGRA good roads conference. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery. Gentlemen, welcome to Queen's Park.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The question is to the Minister of Energy. In a speech to the Rural Ontario Municipal Association yesterday, Premier McGuinty sadly missed his chance to show respect to Ontario families and Ontario municipal leaders by restoring the local decision-making abilities that he stripped away under the Green Energy Act.

I'm speaking at ROMA this afternoon. When it comes to your industrial wind farms forced on unwilling communities, I want to report back to the municipal leaders. Do you share the Premier's view that mayors and wardens who stand up for local residents are nothing more than a bunch of NIMBYs?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** First off, the renewable energy process that these projects go through makes it absolutely mandatory for municipalities and communities to be fully consulted. That obligation is a condition of approval.

But I do appreciate the fact that the ROMA/OGRA conference is going on today. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to masquerade himself as a friend of municipalities, but they remember. They remember his role in a cabinet that downloaded on municipalities shamelessly. They'll never forget the damage that you did to their communities. I hope in your speech later today that you come clean with municipal leaders and apologize for the role you played in supporting the largest download in the history of this province. Apologize to those leaders today when you get them—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just say to the honourable members on the opposition side that I'm sure your leader would like to hear the answer so that could be part of his response, and don't shout him down.

*Supplementary?*

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, Premier McGuinty has changed, and you've changed, too, Minister. After eight years in office, you've simply lost touch with what's happening in communities across our province.

Before he was first elected in 2003, Premier McGuinty said he would consult municipalities about policies that affect them, but then he used his Green Energy Act to strip away their local powers. And to throw salt in the wound, when it comes to industrial wind farms, he now calls them a bunch of NIMBYs. You see them as a bunch

of NIMBYs; I see them as leaders standing up for local families in the riding who are forced to pay your bills.

Minister, will you do the right thing? Will you restore the local decision-making authority when it comes to the industrial wind farms that you're forcing into unwilling communities from corner to corner to corner across our great province?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order. Government members, please don't encourage the opposition.

Minister.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Once again, ROMA and OGRA are holding their conference today, and it's quite obvious that the Leader of the Opposition thinks he can pull one over on them by masquerading as a friend of municipalities. No matter how hard this Leader of the Opposition tries, he can run from his past, but he can't hide.

The Leader of the Opposition sat in the cabinet that downloaded costs to municipalities for public health, Ontario Works, ODSP, social housing, land ambulances, the Ontario drug plan, roads and highways, and court security. The result was the largest download in the history of this province, making our communities all but unsustainable. Then he paid them the ultimate disrespect by forcing unwanted amalgamations on those very same municipalities.

When you get the chance to speak to those municipal leaders today, apologize—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier McGuinty has changed—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock for a second. Minister of Agriculture.

Members, we have a number of guests here today who want to hear question period. The Speaker wants to hear the questions and the answers and is finding it extremely difficult with some of the noise from both sides of the House.

Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier McGuinty has changed, and more and more people are catching on to that fact, Minister. Some 75 municipalities and counting have now passed resolutions objecting to your policy of enforcing industrial wind farms into these communities—75 municipalities and counting—but you believe that you know best. We side with the locally elected officials and the people that they represent who want to see a moratorium in our province.

Here's the kicker: Premier McGuinty has put in a Liberal seat-saver program. He exempted your riding in Scarborough from having these projects forced upon it. You have one rule for Liberal cabinet ministers and another rule for everywhere else. Minister, scrap your seat-saver program—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We've already responded to that question many times.

What I and our municipal colleagues want to know is, will the Leader of the Opposition confirm that he will share his energy plan today with municipal leaders, or is he afraid to share it with those very same municipal leaders, just like he's afraid to share it with Ontario families? Or is the PC campaign secretary's comment true: that you won't even share your plan with your own party members at your convention coming up in April? I was shocked to hear your PC campaign secretary say to your party members, "If you're knocking on doors after May 1, you're going to have an idea of what we stand for."

You've been in opposition for almost eight years. You've been leader for over 20 months. You've got to be kidding me: After all that time, you still have no idea what you stand for?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just remind the honourable member from Nepean that we don't make reference to the attendance of members.

New question.

#### ARBITRATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Attorney General. Attorney General, your arbitration system is badly broken, and Ontario families are getting stuck with the bills. In Thunder Bay, for example, the arbitrated deal they reached with fire services on February 8 took seven years to reach, and cash-strapped municipalities say they simply don't have the ability to pay for your arbitrators' out-of-touch wage increases.

What is the Attorney General prepared to do to fix an arbitration system that is badly broken and driving up costs for cash-strapped Ontario families?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** To the Minister of Labour.

1040

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question from across the way. As we know, collective bargaining agreements are the best way to move forward; 99% of the time they've been agreed to. For those that had essential service designations, 80% of the time we've had agreement. When it comes to arbitration, we recognize the concerns, we're open to listening as to what we can do going forward, but we still believe that those are the best agreements, and those cities recognize that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The sad reality, Minister, is that arbitrators are thumbing their noses at the provincial government, they're thumbing their noses at municipalities and they're thumbing their noses at Ontario families who have to pay the bill at the end of the day. The problem is that you've created an incentive for people to get away from local bargaining and to line up in a long line for provincial arbitrators, who are handing out agreements

that are out of touch with the ability of Ontario families to pay those bills.

Minister, this system is wrong. You continue to dither. You continue to delay. You have not wrestled this to the ground. What are you prepared to do to fix an arbitration system that is badly broken and doesn't respect the fact that families have to pay the bills?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Let's remind everyone that this is the same system that was in place when they were there as well. In the last 10 years, 6,000 settlements have occurred without having to go to arbitration, and we encourage municipalities and all parties engaged in the collective bargaining arrangements to do just that. We will continue to listen and we will continue to be available.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You know, I guess people appreciate the fact that you listen and will be available, but with all due respect, Ontario families want you to act, to make a decision and to fix a broken arbitration system that is driving bills through the roof for families already hit with skyrocketing hydro bills and the HST. They want change in this province and they want a fix for this arbitration mess you've created.

Minister, you know one of the problems is that smaller communities have to pay the bills for settlements that are derived from those in the largest, most affluent communities. You see smaller communities facing an arbitration process that unfairly treats them as being more affluent and ignores local economic growth and ability to pay. An Ontario PC government will fix a broken arbitration system to respect the fact that families pay the bills. Why won't you do that, Minister?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Arbitration is one of the tools in the collective bargaining process that is used as a last resort. We still believe that agreements behind closed doors are best, and our government encourages parties to make every effort to resolve their disputes at the bargaining table. Our mediators will also always be available. But what we didn't do—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

There are times when members interject and I attempt to call them to order, but they are interjecting so loudly that they don't hear me. I just remind all members to try and tone things down so we that can hear both the questions and the answers.

Minister?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We've been very successful at this, and our record speaks for itself, a record, by the way, which—we will not go back to the way they did, and that was laying off their nurses, calling them hula hoops, or the sweeping cuts that they made, or firing meat inspectors. The labour unrest that existed in the past was unacceptable. We're proud of our record. We're proud of the fact that we maintain labour peace for competitive reasons, for economic reasons and for the well-being of all of our citizens.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. In June 2010, the government released a technical paper examining the impact of the HST. It said the HST on everything from home heating to haircuts would cost consumers about \$4.7 billion more and would be a wash in the long run. Why, then, does a government document obtained through the freedom of information process show that the HST will actually cost consumers \$6.8 billion and leave consumers billions and billions of dollars behind?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Our tax plan for jobs and growth will create 600,000 net new jobs over the next 10 years. Now, the leader of the third party wants to pick out numbers from public documents. All of that information is readily available, publicly available.

The reality is, when one adds up the tax cuts we've provided for individuals and families, including the lowest personal income tax rate on the first \$37,000, which that member and her party voted against, 93% of Ontarians are paying less in taxes to create better jobs for the future. That's what leadership's all about.

We need to know where that member and her party stand.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Quite on the contrary, there's actually a \$2-billion difference between what the government said about the HST behind closed doors and what they told people right before their unpopular tax kicked in. Can the Acting Premier explain to people why there is such a difference?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The explanation is this: The leader of the third party is misusing numbers and trying to pretend that they're secret. In fact, we have published numbers repeatedly.

The leader of the NDP doesn't want to acknowledge the fact that she has changed her position. Last year they were going to get rid of the HST; now they're going to fix it.

We shouldn't be surprised because that party—I like to think of them as the “never done pandering” party, the NDP—does not want to create jobs in the future, doesn't want a better tax system for our businesses and families, doesn't want to create new jobs in the north. They want more taxes, fewer jobs and a less bright future.

That's not what we're about. We stand against them. We stand for a fair tax system for working Ontario families, and that is exactly what we have delivered—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, the only numbers I'm bringing forward in this chamber are the ones that this government kept behind closed doors and didn't want to reveal to the public.

To the public, the McGuinty Liberals claimed that the HST would, in fact, be a wash, but when the Premier and his ministers were behind closed doors, they talked openly about the fact that the HST would cost \$1,500 per year

per household. For families struggling to pay the bills, that's a huge difference.

Why were the McGuinty Liberals so afraid of being honest with Ontario families about the HST and its impact?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The numbers are public. They're there for everyone to see. They've been updated on a quarterly basis.

I would refer her to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and work done by a chap named Hugh Mackenzie, who I know that member is very familiar with. He said that, overall—because unlike the leader of the third party, he looks at the personal tax cut, which she voted against; he looked at the Ontario child benefit, which she voted against; he looked at the one-time payments, which she voted against; he looked at the benefits over time to all Ontarians.

And so I have to ask the leader of the third party once again, on the HST: Will it stay or will it go? Just tell the truth. Just tell Ontarians what you really stand for, and stand with Ken Lewenza and Sid Ryan to protect public services for a better future for Ontario.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Acting Premier. The Minister of Finance likes to bluster—loudly, I might add—about his tax cuts and his tax credits, but the same government document shows that even after those things are taken into account, consumers are left paying as much as \$4.4 billion more. If he forgets the document, I can send it over by way of a page.

Why can't this government be straight up with families and tell them just how much their tax shift is costing them?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, I want to be careful and respect the chair and this House in the language I use, but there is an incomplete and inaccurate picture being played by the leader of the third party. She selects numbers—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I don't know why the Premier is taking the week off.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** This is a final warning for the member from Nepean—Carleton. I've warned her once—this is the second time—about making references to attendance.

Minister?

1050

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The estimates were published first in 2009. They've been updated on a quarterly basis moving forward, accurately. They have been analyzed by a whole gamut of outsiders, including the Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Again, will it stay or will it go? Last year, the leader of the third party said that she would get rid of the HST. Do you know what the NDP in Nova Scotia did?

**Interjection:** They raised it.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They raised the HST. The leader of the third party says, "Cut taxes," yet her predecessor wrote me a letter, saying, "Raise the old provincial sales tax."

We reject that tired old rhetoric of no jobs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Minister of Finance assumes that businesses are going to pass on \$4.4 billion in savings to consumers. Families don't believe that oil and gas companies, banks and utilities are going to cough up their savings and pass them over, and neither do New Democrats. Why is the minister trying to pull a fast one on Ontario families?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The numbers are clear and published. Ontario families will be ahead of the game; 93% will pay less in overall taxes.

I challenge the leader of the third party again: Are you going to get rid of the HST? It's a very simple question, it's a very simple proposition, but she won't answer it.

I'd just remind her of what people like Ken Lewenza and Sid Ryan have said about the importance of protecting our health care, about the importance of building a better education system for a brighter future for our children. That party stands against jobs, it stands against a better future, it stands against growth in the economy, and that's why Ontarians will turn to Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party for a progressive alternative for a better future—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I just remind the finance minister about the use of names. He should be using titles.

Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The finance minister refuses to acknowledge that they were looking at one set of numbers privately, behind closed doors, and a totally different set of numbers was what they allowed out to the public.

Household budgets, meanwhile, are being hit very, very hard every day. The price of electricity is set to double in this province. The price of filling up your car with gas went up 20% in just one year. And if you have a parent waiting for long-term care in this province, you can get dinged for hundreds of dollars a day in costs.

Time and time again, this government has shown that they are not on the side of Ontario families, so why would anybody at all believe their claims about the HST?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member and her party have no credibility on the HST. Let me remind her of what the head of the Ontario Federation of Labour said. He complained "that her rhetoric undermines public support for" those funds "that fund social programs." Ken Lewenza of the CAW reminded the leader of the third party, "Andrea, the harmonized sales tax ... cannot be an issue from the progressive side.... We do not want every Ontarian to think" this is bad. Why? Because we're cutting taxes for families.

She can use and misuse and unquote statistics from documents that we've made public—and I'm proud that

we've made those documents public, something that her government never did when they were in office. It's about a better future, more jobs. That's what we're about; that's what they're against. Ontarians will vote for that every time.

## WIND TURBINES

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, 75 communities and counting proposed resolutions objecting to the Premier's industrial wind turbines being forced on them. Since Premier McGuinty missed his opportunity to tell local decision-makers that he would restore the power stripped away by the Green Energy Act, will you?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We've responded to this question many times, but I think what is of interest is that, frankly, when we think of when that party is going to come out with their plan, their caucus is in a total, absolute state of confusion.

Let me go over this with you, Mr. Speaker: The member for Simcoe-Grey said back in October, "We're close to putting out our platform." The member for Thornhill said—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

Minister of Economic Development. Minister of Community Safety. Attorney General, focus on the floor, not the media gallery, please. Member from Renfrew. Member from Durham, and Renfrew again.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** As I was saying, it's a total state of confusion over there. The member for Simcoe-Grey said in October, "We're close to putting out a party platform." Then the member for Thornhill said sometime in early 2011. Well, it's early 2011 and nothing.

The member for Nepean-Carleton said, "Our platform will be coming out in March." Guess what? It's March. They're still not sharing their plan. Then the member for Lanark said, "I guess I'll let it out of the bag. We'll be launching our platform in April."

They don't want to let families know what their plans are, but their leader doesn't even want to let his own caucus know what their plans are.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** Well, it's obvious that the minister doesn't have an answer or will not answer the question.

Minister, here are some of the municipalities that propose resolutions objecting to the Premier forcing his industrial wind turbines: the townships of Adelaide Metcalfe, Warwick, Dawn-Euphemia and North Middlesex, Huron-Kinloss, Bruce county and Huron East, Asphodel-Norwood and Cavan-Monaghan, Kawartha Lakes, North Perth, Mapleton and Wellington North, Ajax and Pickering, Brantford and Prince Edward County. Their Liberal MPPs did not stand up to the Premier and neither have you, so I will. When will the Premier dump his industrial

turbines on them against their objections? Or is it something you only do in PC ridings?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Those members get up and dump on wind power and those kinds of things when they're here, but when they are in their own ridings they're joining me when we're announcing renewable energy jobs right across this province, whether we're in Windsor announcing 700 jobs; Tilsonburg, 900 jobs; Don Mills, at Celestica, 300 jobs; Satcom, in the member's own riding where she joined me in announcing 300 jobs; Fort Erie, 225 jobs; 500 jobs in Guelph; 100 jobs in Mississauga; 50 to 60 jobs in Woodbridge; 500 jobs in London; 150 jobs in Cambridge; 200 jobs in Oakville; 300 jobs in Hamilton; 200 jobs in Mississauga; 100 jobs in—I could go on; 60 jobs in Sault Ste. Marie. We're creating jobs right across this province.

## DIABETES

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Later today, the Canadian Diabetes Association will hold a media event with the health minister. Both will highlight the multimillion-dollar cost of diabetes on our health care system. Both will also highlight that nearly six million Canadians live with the condition known as pre-diabetes. Fifty percent of people with pre-diabetes will develop type 2 diabetes.

My question to the Minister of Community and Social Services: Why is she ignoring her own health minister and eliminating pre-diabetes from the revised special diet allowance program?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** That's a very good question. I want to commend the Minister of Health for putting forward the strategy on diabetes. We know that diabetes is very prevalent for Ontarians and especially for our members in the north. It's very important to make sure that they have the treatment, the test and the education. That's why we've developed this wonderful strategy.

With regard to the special diet: You know that we have spent a lot of money; we have a lot of people who are on special diets. We know that we need to review the special diet, and it's redirected to the two commissioners when they review social assistance to give us advice on what we—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

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**Mr. Michael Prue:** On April 1, this minister will eliminate that entire program that the Minister of Health is going out to talk about today. That is exactly what you're going to do.

We know that diabetes rates are growing exponentially. We know the cost to our health care system will only continue to grow if we don't invest in prevention. The diabetes association and the Minister of Health have asked the finance committee to keep pre-diabetes as a funded condition in the revised special diet allowance so

that those who are at risk can eat healthier foods in order to prevent type 2 diabetes.

The Minister of Health recognizes the importance. How can this minister foolishly bar Ontarians with pre-diabetes from accessing a special diet and nutritious food?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to talk about what we're doing on diabetes. There is no question that the more than one million people in this province who are suffering from diabetes have to get the help they need to prevent their disease from progressing, if at all possible.

Let me take a moment to talk about some of the things we have done. We've created 204 diabetes education teams right across this province—in family health teams, in community health centres, in hospitals—helping patients manage their disease more effectively. We're the first province to fund insulin pumps for children with diabetes, and we've now expanded that to adults with type 1 diabetes. We have a very aggressive diabetes strategy. It's \$740 million, and it includes public education, expanded services, a diabetes registry, a number of different initiatives—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** My question today is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, the member from Simcoe-Grey was recently in my riding of Peterborough warning my constituents that our government was turning the debt retirement charge, or DRC, into a permanent tax grab. The member for the official opposition even called for a forensic audit of the DRC, which he says should be paid off by now and removed for all—

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just want to take this opportunity to warn the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and the member from Cambridge. I'm not impressed. You know about the use of props in this House. The Speaker is not naive enough to not have had some suspicion that something was up when you see the cameras rolling in for question period and introductions—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Laughing at it is not helpful.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Finance.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

Member from Renfrew. Minister of Economic Development, that's not helpful either. Minister of Infrastructure.

I'm going to make this comment regarding the stunt that took place here. It's important—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It was a stunt, and it's very important that we have allowed the opportunity for the media to be here sitting in the gallery behind me, this gallery here. If stunts like this are going to persist, I'm going to be entering into discussions with the media gallery and we're not going to allow the cameras in—because if I had just stood, that would not have been on television. We're all going to see this on the news tonight, courtesy of these two honourable members.

What you need to be conscious of is the impact of actions like that on the whole of this House.

Member from Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, the member from Simcoe–Grey was recently in my riding of Peterborough, warning my constituents that our government was turning the debt retirement charge, or DRC, into a permanent tax grab. The member from the official opposition even called for a forensic audit of the DRC, which he says should be paid off by now and removed from all electricity bills. He warned that our government is not being transparent with Ontarians.

My constituents have often asked me about the DRC and why we have to pay it. To the minister: What can I tell my constituents about the debt retirement charge and the opposition's claim that this is a permanent tax grab?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I want to provide a little history on the debt retirement charge. The debt retirement charge was added to every Ontarian's electricity bill in 2002 by the Harris-Hudak government. That was part of a failed restructuring of the electricity sector in 1999. What's really interesting is that the failed restructuring—they created an unfunded liability of \$19.4 billion. To make matters worse, from 1999 to 2003, the Harris-Hudak government actually added to the unfunded liability—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Simcoe–Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** When you fudge the books—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Simcoe–Grey, that is not parliamentary. Would you please withdraw the comment.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Auditor General has said and, I point out, signed off on the fact that the Harris-Hudak government added an unfunded liability. They added \$1 billion after putting the charge on everyone's bill.

Another thing the official opposition doesn't want the constituents in Peterborough to know is that the PC government set it at \$7.8 billion by overestimating the value of future contracts. They misled in terms of not setting—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Member from Durham.

I'd just ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the minister for the explanation. I'm surprised that the member from Simcoe–Grey, who was energy minister when the stranded debt was created, doesn't seem to have his facts straight. That said, the previous Conservative government is no stranger to unusual math. They're the same government that hid a \$5.6-billion deficit from Ontarians.

Minister, it's clear to me who's responsible for the fact that my constituents have to pay the DRC on their hydro bills, but our government has now been in power for over seven years. To the minister: What has our government done to tackle the hydro debt, and how much longer will my constituents have to pay it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** When we took over government, we found an unfunded liability of \$20 billion. In fact, for four years, they charged the charge and didn't apply it to the debt; it went up. This government, on the other hand, has paid that down by \$6 billion. Every nickel that has been raised while we've been in government has gone to the debt retirement charge.

We're cleaning up the mess of the unfunded liability. We're cleaning up the additional cost they put on every ratepayer's bill and we are submitting it every year to the auditor, who signs off on it. They can say what they want; the facts speak for themselves. They're signed off by the auditor.

We paid down the debt; you added to it. We're building a stronger electricity system for a better future for all Ontarians.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members, please come to order.

New question.

## LIQUOR LICENSING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Attorney General: The Attorney General showed he's as out of touch with Ontario families as his friend Premier McGuinty. When asked to explain the timing of your proposed changes to provincial liquor laws, you said Ontario families were "ready for more freedom." Minister, this was no slip of the tongue; it's an attitude. Later that same day you said that it's the "type of freedom that I think the people of Ontario are ready for."

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Attorney General, what makes you think Ontario families need you to decide if and when they're ready for more freedom?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I was pleased to introduce the proposals for some changes to the liquor licence laws. What we're proposing is to give individuals and municipalities the choice. If they want to use the new

options, they can use them. If they don't want to use them, they don't have to use them. That's what freedom is about: It's about an option, an opportunity.

Do you know what's interesting? That the honourable critic from the Leader of the Opposition's party was there. He was so overjoyed that he was literally dancing at the proposals. You need to get together over there. You need to figure out the message. Free the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** First we have the nanny Premier and now we have the nanny general in the province of Ontario. In the morning the nanny Premier showed how out of touch he was—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** A final warning to the member from Lanark.

Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** That morning the nanny Premier showed just how out of touch he has become by saying that the changes were coming because "we're just kind of growing up a little bit as Ontarians." In the afternoon you showed how out of touch you were when you said families are ready for more freedom.

The Ontario PCs will treat people as the adults they are and neighbours to be respected—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I take from the line of questioning that the Leader of the Opposition is against any changes to the liquor laws in the province of Ontario. I take from his question that he does not believe Ontarians are able to walk around with an alcoholic drink at a festival. He's going to vote against those. I take from those that he doesn't want any changes to the enforcement system that have been called upon by those who want to make sure that we have the strongest enforcement in Ontario. He's going to vote against that. I take that he doesn't want tour operators to be able to provide fully inclusive packaged holidays. The Leader of the Opposition says no. He says no to choice for Ontarians. He says no to local option. He says no to municipalities. All he offers them is a buck a beer, and they're going to need a lot of those with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## CANCER PREVENTION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre de la Promotion de la santé. Yesterday, the American Academy of Pediatrics released a study that called for a ban on artificial tanning for youth. The article reads that "governments should work towards passing legislation to ban minors' access to tanning salons." Ontario could have been a leader by acting on my private member's bill, but it's never too late to do good, is it? When will the minister enact legislation banning youth from using tanning beds?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I would say, first of all, that our government is committed to the health of Ontario's children. I also want to say that through Health Canada's Radiation Emitting Devices Act, the federal government plays a lead role on this issue. We support Health Canada's guidelines, which recommend that children under the age of 16 do not use tanning beds.

We continue to work with our 36 public health units to promote policies that raise awareness of the risks associated with using tanning beds. We also realize and recommend to parents to monitor their kids and to know that they have an important role to play by educating their children about the effects of ultraviolet rays as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, I would say that it is old news that voluntary regulation for that industry does not work. This is why the cancer society, the Ontario Medical Association, the Canadian Dermatology Association and now the American Academy of Pediatrics and ALPHA are all asking your ministry to act. It is not up to the federal government and it is not up to parents. It is your responsibility, and I see that this minister is going to drag her heels on this important issue.

We're talking about a known carcinogen. Artificial tanning is just as risky as tobacco. Using tanning beds increases your risk of skin cancer by 75%. We keep saying we can beat and prevent cancer. When will Ontario join the growing list of jurisdictions and take action on this important public health issue?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Our government has done more to prevent cancer than any other government and has invested money in cancer prevention initiatives. As I said before, we support Health Canada's guideline recommending that children under 16 years of age do not use tanning beds. We continue to work with our 36 public health units.

With respect to the member's bill, the time to discuss that is during the time allocated in the Legislature for debate.

We will continue to raise awareness of this issue and we will continue to educate individuals and parents about the dangers associated with the use of tanning beds.

## DISCLOSURE OF TOXINS

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** My question is for—I'll take it to the Acting Premier, for supplementary reasons.

Acting Premier, we find out that the use of Agent Orange is expanding, more so in the province of Ontario. Recently, we found out that it's been used to clear corridors for Ontario Hydro, that Agent Orange was used at that particular time. Can you explain? Do you have any details as to how it was used and the impacts that it has for those individuals using Agent Orange on Ontario Hydro lines?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'm happy to answer this question. I want to just start with indicating how concerned I

am about this issue. Since learning about it, certainly I've been committed to obtaining all the facts and sharing this information in an open and transparent fashion.

We now know that herbicide 2,4,5-T, which was approved by Health Canada at the time, was used during a 30-year period in Ontario during the 1950s, the 1960s and the 1970s by the then Department of Lands and Forests, the Ministry of Transportation, and Hydro One's predecessor, Ontario Hydro. I'm also aware that it was used by private companies during the period, including the agricultural sector, on non-crop lands such as fence-rows, and by municipalities for weed control. We continue to look into whether or not it was used by other organizations.

I want to thank the former Tembec employee who came and brought this issue to my ministry's attention. I had a chance to speak with this individual over the telephone a week ago, and I—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** The question goes back—I received the information from Jack Hedman. He was a teenager who actually worked on it and was sprayed directly with Agent Orange. He was told at that time that it was actually so safe that they could drink it.

The difficulty is gaining the information, and the minister expressed that she's looking further into finding other organizations. Minister, can you disclose this information so that all of the province can find out which organizations were utilizing Agent Orange, as well as the other major players in the province of Ontario who have used it, so that these people can find out how they are going to be impacted?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I appreciate the question. I too am interested in providing accountability and transparency on this issue.

I have two priorities. The first is to identify anybody who may have been exposed to the herbicide back in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and possibly the 1980s, and then to work with health experts to fully understand the impacts that the herbicide spray will have on their health.

That's why we've created an independent fact-finding panel—we're in the process of putting that group together—that will have a mandate of gathering more information on this issue and making it available to the people of Ontario. I've also assembled a herbicide spraying program project team in MNR that will work to coordinate the information across ministries.

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Yesterday, I wrote a letter to the federal Minister of Health asking for their assistance in coordinating a government-wide response to this issue. I think it behooves them, considering that they approved this herbicide that is being used across Canada and by a number of organizations—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Acting Premier. First Nations leaders across the north warned the McGuinty Liberals that the Far North Act was flawed from the very beginning. It didn't respect their ability to make decisions about the future, they said. Martin Falls First Nation will be restricting access to the Ring of Fire after significant exploration work was done on their traditional territory without any involvement at all from them.

After refusing to listen to concerns of northern communities over the Far North Act, are the McGuinty Liberals surprised at all that there are real problems here?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I know that my colleague the Minister of Northern Development and Mines is working very closely with Martin Falls on specific issues.

My colleague, myself and the Minister of Natural Resources were at an economic conference with Nishnawbe Aski Nation just last week in Thunder Bay—a three-day conference. You know what we heard? What we heard were the plans that are actually proceeding.

From Chief Hardisty of Moose Cree, the Lower Matagami is proceeding. It will be employing hundreds of people from First Nations. We heard from other communities that are working very closely with businesses to provide real economic opportunities in the north. We heard about different communities that are engaged in planning to make sure that the planning and economic development that proceeds is where they would like and benefits all in the community. There is a lot of very positive development going on—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Perhaps the Attorney General should go over to ROMA and participate in the panel that's happening about the Ring of Fire right now and hear from Stan Beardy some of his opinions.

The Ring of Fire is a huge opportunity for the north and First Nations who live there, but good jobs and sustainable development won't come to the north if northerners don't have a voice. That is the fundamental problem with this legislation. First Nations leaders want to make sure that their community shares in the prosperity their land creates.

Why didn't the McGuinty government listen to First Nations' concerns from the very, very beginning of this process instead of trying to impose a solution on them from here at Queen's Park?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** In fact, we were all with Grand Chief Beardy just last week at the economic conference. It was the one that he was chairing, effectively.

There is a lot of very positive development going on with Nishnawbe Aski Nation constituent chiefs and members. We are constantly working with businesses and other groups that wish to develop, to make sure that

the partnerships with First Nations, with communities, are very strong and benefit the people of First Nations.

It is something that the opposition party would not know, including the member from Renfrew. It is something that the third party isn't particularly familiar with. They just like to criticize. But we're working very hard, and the examples are flowing now.

The work is now under way. Whether it's the Victor diamond mine, whether it's the Lower Mattagami project or countless other projects, they're under way, and people are finding employment. The benefits of development are flowing to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### CHRONIC CEREBROSPINAL VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY

**Hon. Aileen Carroll, P.C.:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, for those living with the effects of a chronic disease like multiple sclerosis, daily tasks such as walking down the stairs can be challenging. And for those affected, as well as for their family and friends, living with this chronic disease is both physically and emotionally debilitating.

Although there currently is no conclusive evidence to support the procedure, there is demand for CCSVI, or chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, treatment for MS. I understand that, as a result, many Ontarians are choosing to travel out of the country to receive the treatment.

Will the minister please advise the House what the government is doing to help Ontarians who do decide to travel out of the country for CCSVI?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thanks to the member opposite for her advocacy on this and other issues.

I know I speak for all members of this Legislature when I say how happy we would all be if there were treatments found to reverse the effects of multiple sclerosis. There is increased awareness of CCSVI for MS, but at this time, the procedure is experimental, and its efficacy must be proven before it becomes an insured service. That's why Ontario is not advocating for CCSVI.

However, I do want patients who choose to go out-of-country for CCSVI to receive the very best care upon their return to Ontario. That's why, earlier today, I asked leading MS experts to provide advice on how best to provide care for these patients when they come back to Ontario. Their first order of business will be to assemble—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Hon. Aileen Carroll, P.C.:** I know that this will be well received by Ontarians who do choose the CCSVI treatment. Even though the science to date has not indicated the efficacy of this procedure, we do indeed know that people are choosing to have the procedure out-of-country.

With the increased coverage and awareness of the CCSVI procedure, there have been calls for this service to become insured under OHIP. Can you clarify what the government is doing to move toward insuring CCSVI?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As we all know, we fund procedures only where evidence indicates their benefit.

Last year, my ministry asked OHTAC, the Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee, to review the current evidence on CCSVI. They concluded that, currently, evidence does not support clinical trials. However, they do continue to monitor new evidence and will provide their recommendations if more evidence becomes available. Much more evidence demonstrating the efficacy of CCSVI is required before it becomes clear that clinical trials are the next step.

However, the development of a national registry by the federal government would help to create a full picture of the MS population and treatments they are receiving. We are urging the federal government and other provinces to move forward with this initiative, and I will assure you that Ontario will—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### STOCK EXCHANGE

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Last week, the Minister of Finance asked the Legislature to strike a Select Committee on the Proposed Transaction of the TMX Group and the London Stock Exchange Group. The purpose of the committee, according to the minister's motion, is to receive and consider all recommendations so that an unbiased, informed report can be tabled in the Legislature for its consideration.

On Friday, my colleague the member for Newmarket—Aurora and I delivered a letter to the minister asking the finance minister to refrain from making any further negative comments on the proposed transaction until the committee had completed its work, this to ensure that the work of the committee is not further prejudiced by the statements.

Will the minister assure this House that his statements to date are not already government policy, and will he commit to cease from making any further prejudicial comments on the matter?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I know that the party opposite doesn't want to state positions about where they stand, but let me say this: I've raised a number of important questions, and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for having said that those were important questions that he endorsed.

I will continue to ask questions. That's part of my job. I'm surprised you would want a finance minister not to ask questions, much less answer them—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final warning to the member from Renfrew.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I am glad that this government chose to appoint a committee, being ably chaired by my colleague the minister without portfolio. I look forward to the recommendations of that committee, as well as the advice I'm receiving from the Ontario Securities Commission and the advice I've been receiving from a number of individuals, including the proponents, whom I met with for the second time this week.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** In addition to the finance minister making negative comments about the proposed merger, the government appointed another cabinet minister, as he's pointed out, to head this committee. This is the first time in 50 years that a cabinet minister has been appointed to lead a committee. That means we have the finance minister making negative comments about the work the committee is about to do; meanwhile, another member of the same cabinet is chairing the committee.

Will the Minister of Finance assure the House that the statements he is making are not also being made at the cabinet table to influence the chair of the committee?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What I can assure this House and the people of Ontario of is that this government will stand up for the best interests of Ontario and the best interests of Canada.

We will ask difficult questions. We will seek answers on a timely and important debate that's going to happen in this province and this country.

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We will take positions on important issues. We took a position on the HST that's been clear and consistent. We have laid out a plan for a better energy future. So, unlike the member opposite, I am not going to be constrained, nor is this government, in standing up for what's in the best interests of Ontario and Canada.

We have one of the most vibrant financial services sectors in the world. It's growing. We want to make sure that continues to grow. So, yes, I will stand up for Ontario. I wish you'd do the same darned thing. Shame on you.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Grandparents raising their grandchildren have been cut off temporary care assistance funding because the government altered the original intent of the temporary care assistance program. They know that "temporary" refers to custody and the parents' ability to take children from their grandparents into their own custody on very short notice.

My Bill 87, the Ontario Works Amendment Act (Care Assistance), 2010, would fix this problem. Will this minister ensure that grandparents cannot be cut off their funding, by amending her punitive definition and replacing the term "temporary" with the phrase "temporary or indefinite"?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, let me thank all those parents and family members for their commit-

ment to making sure that people who choose to care for these extended family members—I want to thank them for the work they are doing. We will continue to work with families to ensure they receive the support to help children in need.

Answering the question of the member opposite, this is part of the review. With the two commissioners that we have appointed, it's part of their review of social assistance; I'm asking them to review that. The eligibility rules have not changed. Again, I repeat, the eligibility rules have not changed. It is important to note that the number of children benefiting from TCA—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Well, the rules have changed, and you changed them a year ago. This government's refusal to make this correction forces grandparents through the appeal process, during which they receive no financial support. To add insult to injury, the McGuinty Liberals' own appointees to the Social Benefits Tribunal agree with the grandparents and have ordered the reinstatement of their temporary care assistance. They ordered them to reinstate them. So even your own group agree that you're wrong. Will this government finally fix its abusively wrong definition of the word "temporary"?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I am happy to see that the appeal process is working. That's why we have an appeal process.

Again, I'm saying that the eligibility rules were not changed. In fact, since 2003, about 37% more children are receiving TCA, and the amount of money spent on TCA has increased by about 50% since 2003. So the number of cases that existed in the program for 24 months before and after August 2008 has gone down.

I know that the member of the opposite party wants this benefit to be income-tested. I don't know if that's what the grandparents want, to have this benefit income-tested, so we will ask the commissioners, as part of the review of social assistance, to review this program.

#### SPORTS FUNDING

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport. As we all know, sport brings people together, builds communities and motivates people of all ages to stay active so that they can lead healthier and happier lives.

As the member from Brant, I can tell you that I'm very fortunate that we have a riding with many talented local, provincial, national and international level athletes. In fact, Zsolt Daranyi from Brantford won a gold medal in boxing just this week at the Canada Winter Games in Halifax. So I want to congratulate him.

We're very proud of all of our young men and women athletes. With the Vancouver Olympics, the Canada Games and other events, we've just experienced one of the most remarkable years in Ontario's and Canada's history, and seen on the world stage. Can the minister inform the House of what her ministry is doing to build

on these successes by supporting amateur athletes across the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I thank the member from Brant for his question. Our government recognizes the positive impact and, indeed, the power of sports, and takes sport as a very serious matter. We are investing \$23 million a year in provincial sport and multisport organizations and other partners to promote participation and excellence in sport throughout Ontario.

We established the highly successful Quest for Gold program, which has provided \$53 million since 2006 in direct funding to high-performance athletes, and we remain committed to that program. Between 2003 and 2010, this government increased funding to amateur sport by 162%. Ontario's results at the Canada Games demonstrate that our plan for athletes is working. Ontario edged out Quebec as the top-scoring province, capturing the most—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Athletes live for a challenge and they thrive on challenge. This means that they need somewhere to compete, somewhere to practise and somewhere to develop and push their skill levels.

Last summer, Ontario reaped the benefits of competition by hosting the 2010 World Junior Baseball Championship. Previously, it was the 2009 world hockey championships for the juniors. These events transformed their host communities into hubs of excitement and excellence, built community pride, brought tourism and investment, and inspired countless budding athletes. We need to see more of these types of world-stage events throughout Ontario.

Would the minister please tell the House what is being done to bring international sporting events like the world junior hockey and baseball championships to the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I'm pleased to report that Ontario now has a world-class reputation for hosting international amateur sporting events. With financial support from our government, in the past four years we have hosted the FIFA U-20 World Cup of soccer, the Mobility Cup for sailors living with disabilities and the world junior hockey and baseball championships.

We're excited to be hosting the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games, which will bring 250,000 tourists, 10,000 athletes and officials, 15,000 jobs and \$700 million worth of investment in sport infrastructure in the province.

The Hudak-Harris PCs treated sport as a frill. The NDP did not even mention it in their last election platform. The McGuinty government has put Ontario on the sporting map, and we continue to build on these successes. We congratulate all the athletes, all the coaches and everyone involved with the Canada Games.

Sport has the power to build community and to inspire our young people. We continue to support this province's athletic talents.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Mr. Michael Prue:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: It's been brought to my attention that I may have misspoken, and I wish to correct the record. I intended to say that the diabetes association has asked the finance committee to keep pre-diabetes as a funded condition etc. It's been brought to my attention that I also included the Minister of Health, and I ought not to have done so.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. That is a point of order. The member can correct his or her own record.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1138 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### RURAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Today I'm rising to ask the McGuinty government to keep its campaign promise not to close rural schools in this province. Families in Simcoe-Grey agree with the Premier's 2007 election commitment when he said, "Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them." It's sad that the families who trusted this Premier to keep his promise are now being dragged through an accommodation review process that the Liberal Party said would never happen under their watch. That's because they said they would keep rural schools open—full stop.

Clearly, Premier Dalton McGuinty has changed. He once believed that, "If a rural community loses a school, it's not the same as shutting one down in downtown Toronto where there's another one six blocks away." Premier McGuinty used to tell families that doing so would be akin to "robbing the community of an important component." But Premier Dalton McGuinty has changed. He's not the guy he used to be.

Families at Duntroon Central Public School have had to wage a battle to keep their community school open, despite the Premier's assurances that they wouldn't have to if they voted for him. So far, more than 570 people have signed the petition and more than 100 people have written letters to Premier Dalton McGuinty to save Duntroon Central. These families know that closing this small school would have a detrimental effect not just on the students, but on the viability of the community as a whole.

It's a sad day when small-town Ontario and the many hard-working agricultural families who help keep communities like Duntroon strong simply can't trust the word of the Premier of this province.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I visit many schools in my riding of Ottawa—Orléans and like to speak to the students involved in the environmental clubs and classes. I must say, the students and teachers have wonderful projects under way.

The students of Lester B. Pearson gave me a wonderful mural around the Copenhagen climate change conference; I proudly have it on my office wall. Our youth understand that climate change is a real and immediate problem, and they do their share to lower their carbon footprint.

Most climate change scientists agree that we must return to a CO<sub>2</sub> concentration—that's carbon dioxide—of 350 parts per million to maintain global warming to two degrees. We're now at 390 parts per million, and when Ontario closes our last coal electricity generation plant, the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in our atmosphere will be over 400 parts per million. That will be in about May 2014.

No world government action is being taken to lower the CO<sub>2</sub>, and Canada's actions have been to promote the production of greenhouse gases. Canada's CO<sub>2</sub> production continues to increase.

Ontario is a world leader in clean energy. James Hansen, a NASA scientist who has advised several US presidents on climate change, in his book *Storms of My Grandchildren* very clearly states that we must leave the hydrocarbons in the ground, close coal-fired generators and generally replace coal.

Ontario has reduced our coal generation from about 25% in 2003 to 10% in 2010. Ontarians support this province closing coal generation. Replacement of dirty coal has increased the cost of energy; however, the benefits to our health and to reducing greenhouse gases make these increases a good long-term investment for us and our children.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Every member in this House is getting complaints from their constituents regarding ever-increasing hydro rates. We have seen usage rates increase to pay for Dalton McGuinty's Green Energy Act. We have seen time-of-use prices driving rates up. The McGuinty Liberals brought in the HST, which increased prices further, and consumers still have to pay for the debt retirement charge.

I thought I would share with this House the latest way this government has found to gouge ratepayers. Bill and Marie Calberry of Hartington, which is in my riding, were recently advised that their home, which had been classified as residential high density for the last 15 years, has been redesignated as residential low density. I'm not sure where all the houses went to cause low density, but this means that Hydro can collect, on average, another 10% in delivery charges on top of the increases my constituents have already had to endure.

While the McGuinty Liberals continue to fool Ontario citizens with their campaign-styled energy pamphlets, the government has once again found a way to increase the cost of living on the backs of hard-working families. There seems to be no end to the ways which Premier McGuinty has found to squeeze every last nickel and dime out of Ontario hydro ratepayers.

## ROBOTIC SURGERY

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge an important Canadian surgical first that was announced in my community, at the London Health Sciences Centre. On December 3, 2010, Dr. Anthony Nichols and Dr. Kevin Fung performed the first robotically-assisted laryngectomy, which removed a small portion of the voice box. The surgery was required to remove a cancerous lesion from the patient's larynx. By using a surgical robot equipped with a high-definition camera to assist in the surgery, the complexity of the procedure was reduced, the patient's recovery time was shortened, scarring on the throat and neck was minimized, and the patient's need for chemotherapy was eliminated.

LHST is a leading centre for health research and innovation and medical breakthroughs, and has a history of over 50 international and national surgical firsts. I would like to congratulate the hard-working surgical team that was involved in this surgery, and I applaud the ongoing work of the London Health Sciences Centre and their continuous excellence in providing outstanding health care in the province of Ontario in the London region.

## RURAL AND NORTHERN SCHOOLS

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have a statement to the House. It's about rural and northern schools, which are an important part of Ontario. Rural and northern schools are widely recognized for their high educational standards and learning experiences. The framework of rural and northern schools is different from large urban schools. Therefore, they deserve to be governed by a separate rural and northern school policy.

In 2007, during the election, Dalton McGuinty promised that he would keep rural and northern schools open when he declared, "Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them." At the same time, Mr. McGuinty found \$12 million to keep swimming pools open in Toronto, but he hasn't found any money in this big budget that he has to keep rural and northern schools open in Ontario. The people of my area are really concerned, and we want Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education to support the citizens of rural and northern Ontario and suspend all accommodation reviews until the province develops a rural and northern policy that recognizes the values of these schools and their communities.

## DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Recently, I was contacted by a woman from Atikokan who raises an issue that is important across northern Ontario: an issue of, first of all, hoping to get a family doctor, and second, hoping to be able to see a family doctor if in fact you have one. Her point to me is this: "Atikokan has a family health team that offers services in our clinic. I called the clinic on February 22, hoping to get an appointment with my family doctor. I was told the earliest I could get one is May 2—in nine weeks. Other people in the community who have also called the family health team have been told to wait 12 weeks or 15 weeks. This is unacceptable when you need to see a doctor much, much sooner."

1510

Regrettably, the situation in Atikokan is not unusual. In community after community after community, many people don't have a family doctor. Those who are fortunate enough to have a family doctor find that they're waiting many weeks—in some cases, months on top of months—to see a family doctor. They ask the question: Is this acceptable in Ontario?

## ABITIBIBOWATER

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** When we came to government in 2003, 1.3 million people in Ontario didn't have a family doctor. Today that number is down to about 300,000 to 400,000.

But I want to talk to you today about AbitibiBowater, an operation in my riding that I had the pleasure of being part of two great announcements about in the last year or so. The first was our 2010 budget announcement of a \$20-per-megawatt-hour reduction in energy prices for large industrials. That was coupled with a conservation initiative. Together, these two programs will provide around \$25 million in annual savings for the AbiBo mill in my riding, and they'll benefit other large industrials throughout the north.

But this isn't the only good news for this operation. Since they exited from creditor protection some time ago, we've seen a series of good-news announcements. In recent weeks, our government has begun to announce the recipients of the allocations from the competitive wood supply process. The AbiBo sawmill in Thunder Bay was one of the successful bidders. They received an allocation of over 200,000 cubic metres of wood, which will create an additional 50 jobs as well as sustain 160 more, and we're told there is the possibility of a capital expansion to accommodate this wood and these new jobs.

The good news for this facility keeps coming, and we remain hopeful that there will be a further good-news announcement when it comes to the cogen facility at the Thunder Bay mill. If this goes forward, it could provide Thunder Bay and the northwest with a \$50-million construction project and serve as another positive indicator that AbiBo's Thunder Bay operations are viable for the long term and moving full steam ahead.

## ROD MCLEOD

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I rise in the House today to congratulate Rod McLeod from my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, who recently received the Cornwall and Area Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year Award. The Citizen of the Year Award was created to recognize outstanding achievements by Cornwall-area individuals in the fields of commerce, community work or innovation.

Rod was honoured with the award for his numerous contributions to the community as an educator and dedicated hockey coach. Rod McLeod has been a leading innovator for special education in my riding for many years. He is a special consultant for the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, and he initiated the program Alternative Learning for Exceptional Pupils. As a former teacher myself, I take great pride in recognizing outstanding educators like Rod, who support and provide confidence to students who face difficult challenges.

Rod is also a hockey enthusiast and dedicated coach. He is currently the president of Cornwall Girls Hockey Association and coaches a women's competitive A team as well as the Holy Trinity Catholic Secondary School's senior boys' team. His involvement in minor hockey landed him in an opportunity to assist Bobby Orr in creating a national program called Safe and Fun Hockey.

It is with great pleasure that I recognize the achievements of Rod McLeod and thank him for his outstanding contributions to the lives of so many in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry.

## HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** I rise today to talk about the proposed mid-peninsula corridor, an issue of great concern to my constituents. The Leader of the Opposition has been in the news recently, stating that he would like to build a \$9.8-billion superhighway—likely a toll road—that would run from Fort Erie through the middle of the Niagara Peninsula, through my riding, and connect to the 400 highway system somewhere in Burlington. He's not sure of the route or the cost; he is only sure that he wants to get it done, and with limited public input.

I've heard from many constituents concerned that such a highway would pave through greenbelt-protected lands and the escarpment, as well as other environmentally sensitive lands. Farmers are concerned about the loss of farmland that such a highway would cause, not to mention the environmental impact of those vehicles passing through.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Federation of Agriculture has gone on record as being opposed to the superhighway. The residents of Burlington are also against the mid-pen. Former Burlington mayor Cam Jackson is quoted as saying, "The city believes that putting the mid-pen highway through the escarpment is the worst thing that could happen."

With so many people against this \$9.8-billion super-highway, it seems odd that the Leader of the Opposition continues to support it. One can only wonder, after the Leader of the Opposition apparently doing so much public consultation, how he could be so out of touch with the desires of Ontarians.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I beg to inform the House that a change has been made to the order of proceedings for private members' public business. The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has withdrawn his name from the list. Therefore, on March 10, two instead of three ballot items will be debated.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### UKRAINIAN HERITAGE DAY ACT, 2011

##### LOI DE 2011 SUR LE JOUR DU PATRIMOINE UKRAINIEN

Mr. Martiniuk moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 155, An Act to proclaim Ukrainian Heritage Day /  
Projet de loi 155, Loi proclamant le Jour du patrimoine ukrainien.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Does the member wish to make a short statement?

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I'm honoured to introduce this bill on behalf of myself with the support of my colleague from Oshawa, Jerry Ouellette, and my co-sponsors, my friend of many years, Donna Cansfield, the member for Etobicoke Centre and a Canadian of Ukrainian descent, and Cheri DiNovo, member for the riding of Parkdale-High Park, a riding in which my family resided for almost 20 years.

I originally introduced a similar bill for first reading on December 8, 2010, but it has since been necessary to amend some sections to better conform with the historical facts. This bill would see September 7 in each year proclaimed as Ukrainian Heritage Day, honouring the more than 336,000 Canadians of Ukrainian descent across Ontario. I thank Yvan Baker, the president of the Ukrainian Congress, Ontario Provincial Council, and its members for their invaluable assistance in the drafting of this bill. This bill, if passed on March 24, 2010, would be the first of its kind in Canada recognizing Ukrainian heritage.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** It's 2011.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk:** I'm sorry. I meant 2011, if I may correct that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The record is corrected to 2011.

#### PETITIONS

##### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition in support of Bill 100, paved shoulders on provincial highways. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

"Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

"Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

"Whereas Norm Miller's private member's Bill 100 provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Norm Miller's private member's Bill 100, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process."

Of course I support this.

##### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas all Ontarians have the right to a safe home environment; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario works to reduce all barriers in place that prevent victims of domestic violence from fleeing abusive situations; and

"Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act does not take into consideration the special circumstances facing a tenant who is suffering from abuse; and

"Whereas those that live in fear of their personal safety and that of their children should not be financially penalized for the early termination of their residential leases;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Bill 53, the Escaping Domestic Violence Act, 2010, be adopted so that victims of domestic violence be afforded a mechanism for the early termination of their lease to allow them to leave an abusive relationship and find a safe place for themselves and their children to call home."

I wholeheartedly approve this petition, endorse it and send it via page Tyler.

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##### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

"Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government agree to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment, also known as liberation therapy, to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I submit this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST)."

I agree with the petition and I will sign it to that effect.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas all Ontarians have the right to a safe home environment; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario works to reduce all barriers in place that prevent victims of domestic violence from fleeing abusive situations; and

"Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act does not take into consideration the special circumstances facing a tenant who is suffering from abuse; and

"Whereas those that live in fear for their personal safety and that of their children should not be financially penalized for the early termination of their residential leases;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Bill 53, the Escaping Domestic Violence Act, 2010, be adopted so that victims of domestic violence be afforded a mechanism for the early termination of their leases to allow them to leave an abusive relationship and find a safe place for themselves and their children to call home."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

### COYOTES

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas coyote predation is a growing problem in rural Ontario, especially on farms; and

"Whereas there are documented reports that coyotes are attacking people and pets and the attacks are getting more aggressive; and

"Whereas as many as 6,000 lambs and sheep alone are killed by coyotes on Ontario farms every year; and

"Whereas these losses are seriously impacting farmers' incomes; and

"Whereas the current control measures authorized by the Ministry of Natural Resources under the municipal financial incentives for control of coyote predation program are cumbersome and impossible to adhere to;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government minimize predator losses by implementing a province-wide coyote control program that includes a \$200 bounty for each coyote carcass and allow counties to implement their own proof-of-kill collection system."

I've also signed this, and I'm going to give it to Simon.

### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Historical Society, founded in 1888, is a not-for-profit corporation, incorporated by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario April 1, 1899, with a mandate to identify, protect, preserve and promote Ontario's history; and

"Whereas protecting and preserving Ontario's cemeteries is a shared responsibility and the foundation of a civilized society; and

"Whereas the Legislature failed to enact Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, which would have prohibited the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Cooley-Hatt Cemetery (circa 1786) is located in the Niagara Escarpment plan within Ontario's greenbelt plan in Ancaster, city of Hamilton; and

"Whereas this is one of the earliest surviving pioneer cemeteries in Ontario, with approximately 99 burials, including at least one veteran of the War of 1812;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government of Ontario must take whatever action is necessary to prevent the desecration of any part of this sacred burial ground for real estate development."

I agree with this petition, have signed it and send it to the clerks' table.

### PENSION PLANS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** This is a petition on behalf of Simcoe county paramedics.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas several paramedics in Simcoe county had their pensions affected when paramedic services were transferred to the county of Simcoe, as their pensions were not transferred with them from" the hospitals of Ontario pension plan and the OPSEU trust pension plan "to OMERS, meaning they will receive significantly reduced pensions because their transfer did not recognize their years of credited service; and

"Whereas, when these paramedics started with their new employer, the county of Simcoe, their past pensionable years were not recognized because of existing pension legislation; and

"Whereas the government's own Expert Commission on Pensions has recommended that government move swiftly to address this issue; and

"Whereas the government should recognize this issue as a technicality and not penalize hard-working paramedics;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier McGuinty support Simcoe-Grey MPP Jim Wilson's resolution that calls upon the government to address this issue immediately, and ensure that any legislation or regulation allows paramedics in Simcoe county who were affected by the divestment of paramedic services in the 1990s and beyond to transfer their pensions" from hospitals of Ontario pension plan and OPSEU trust to the OMERS pension plan.

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

#### RURAL AND NORTHERN SCHOOLS

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have a petition to save rural and northern schools in Ontario.

"Whereas rural and northern schools are an important part of Ontario; and

"Whereas rural and northern schools are widely recognized for their high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the frameworks of rural and northern schools are different from large urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural and northern school policy; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural and northern schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep swimming pools open in Toronto schools but hasn't found any money to keep rural and northern schools open in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of rural and northern Ontario and suspend all accommodation reviews until the province develops a rural and northern school policy that

recognizes the values of these schools in their communities."

I have also signed this, and give it to Tyler.

#### POWER PLANT

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has cancelled the Oakville peaker plant, citing a decrease in need for power in that community, proposing to meet needs by better transmission, and despite the fact that the government may face a \$1-billion lawsuit due to the cancellation;

"Whereas the King township peaker plant is going forward, with the Ontario government having shut off debate about the plan at the OMB through regulation, after failing to provide a proper environmental assessment or community consultation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To give the King township peaker plant and the local community the same consideration as residents of Oakville, and to decide on the future of the peaker plant on a non-partisan basis."

I have affixed my signature to this and given it to page Simon.

#### ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

"Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational requirements and well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area."

I agree with the petition. I will sign it.

## PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I have a petition today from Rachel Watson, who lives in Strathroy, Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

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"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I agree wholeheartedly with this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Alexandra.

ONTARIO SOCIETY  
FOR THE PREVENTION  
OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** A petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care at its Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification;

"Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed;

"Whereas the Premier and Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution tabled at Queen's Park by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Frank Klees on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislature call on the government of Ontario to review the powers and authority granted to the OSPCA under the OSPCA Act and to make the necessary legislative changes to bring those powers under the authority of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to ensure that there is a clearly defined and effective provincial oversight of all animal shelter services in the province, and to separate the inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA from its functions as a charity providing animal shelter services."

I have signed this and give it to Julian.

## HIGHWAY 26

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** A petition concerning Highway 26 in my riding:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 was approved by MPP Jim Wilson and the previous PC government in 2000; and

"Whereas a number of horrific fatalities and accidents have occurred on the old stretch of Highway 26; and

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 is critical to economic development and job creation in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government stop the delay of the Highway 26 redevelopment and act immediately to ensure that the project is finished on schedule, to improve safety for area residents and provide economic development opportunities and job creation in Simcoe-Grey."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

## GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have a petition here to the Parliament of Ontario from Toby Barrett.

"Whereas Ontario families are struggling in an economic downturn to meet the demands of eco taxes, the HST, energy price hikes, wasteful spending and increased taxes;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"Initiate the process for legislation to allow Ontario residents to recall Dalton."

I've signed this.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION  
LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT,  
2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT  
DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL  
À LA COMMISSION DE TRANSPORT  
DE TORONTO

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 28, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission / Projet de loi 150, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail à la Commission de transport de Toronto.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I am delighted to stand up today and add my voice to the debate on Bill 150, the Toronto

Transit Commission Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2011.

This is a very simple matter. It's a matter of ensuring that the people of Toronto are not held hostage by unions. That's what this is about. That's what the people of Toronto asked for. They sought this assistance in the October mayoralty election. Rob Ford was clear that he would seek it, so this should serve as no surprise to anyone.

If I can recall the three main planks that I heard Rob Ford campaign on, the first one was, "Stop the gravy train." The second was, "I'm going to build subways," and the third one is, "There will be no more TTC strikes. I will ask the province to pass this legislation."

That's what Rob Ford said; that's what he has followed through on so far. People voted for him overwhelmingly, and we can only consider that a plebiscite. Therefore, to his credit, the Premier has seen what Rob Ford succeeded in doing in that election and has allowed government legislation to be placed before us. The people wanted it; the McGuinty government is granting it; our party is supporting it. The Working Families Coalition might not like this—note to Premier.

Let me take you back to April 2008. In April 2008, we were called into special session on a Sunday here in this Legislature to consider back-to-work legislation to send TTC workers who had gone on strike overnight on the Friday preceding, on a wildcat basis, and had caused great grief to a number of people in the city of Toronto—this was the first time that I actually came to this House and felt angry. That was six or seven months after I came here for the first time. My anger, as I said at the time, wasn't personal. It was an expression of what I was hearing on the streets of Toronto and particularly in my riding of Thornhill, which is, after all, on the northern border of Toronto and served largely by the TTC. The TTC people had walked out on a Friday night. They had stranded their riders without notice.

I'd like to quote from Hansard at that time. This was from myself; this is what I said: "I live and work here in Toronto, and I use the TTC myself.

"People are angry, and justifiably so. No one likes surprises. People want dependability, and, as the Premier has ably pointed out, people want courtesy. They have indeed extended courtesy this weekend one to another, but they want it in return.... People are angry at the amalgamated transit workers' union, they are angry at Mayor David Miller, they are angry at TTC Chair Adam Giambrone and, to an extent, they are angry at the McGuinty government. They are angry to the point where the words 'essential service' are being heard spoken all over this city this weekend. No one likes that, but it is what I've been hearing. Indeed, we, this Legislature, are declaring the TTC to be an essential service on a one-time basis this weekend, because people need the TTC. We need the TTC on a regular basis.

"Ask yourself whether you'd be feeling something akin to anger if you were the nurse who had left a hospital shift at midnight on Friday, expecting to get home,

and had not been able to do so; ask yourself if you'd been the youngster from my riding who went down to the Toronto entertainment district on Friday night and got out without the \$40 in pocket to get back to Thornhill absent the TTC."

Indeed, that is what happened. That's what I said at the time. I felt it then and I feel it now.

Obviously, there's a sentiment that runs deep in the citizenry of Toronto who feel the same way, or Mayor Ford wouldn't have been reflecting it when he was candidate Ford. He wouldn't have received that kind of a majority and that kind of support if he hadn't planned legislation like that. Again, this government has acceded to his request.

I did then, and I do now, speak for the constituency of Thornhill: 150,000 residents of that constituency, to a large extent very dependent on TTC in their daily lives. They live and they work here in Toronto. People want and deserve the dependability and accountability that I said they wanted that one night in 2008. They want it on a go-forward, ongoing basis. They have little choice: It's the TTC or it's your car or it's a cab or it's your feet. You might not have a car, you might not have money for the cab and your feet might have to carry you 20 or 30 kilometres, depending on what your disposition is in Toronto at any given time.

Even this Premier would agree; he has said that people deserve this. So we all must agree: Declaring the TTC an essential service must be the right thing to do. It is the desire and it is the need of the mayor and of the majority of this city, and it's not a "maybe."

Transit is an essential service. With poor infrastructure and Liberal delays on public works projects—I might cite the Yonge Street north extension from Finch; it comes to mind. Public transit is the lifeblood of a city, and we don't have the arteries to connect.

The Liberals have been pandering to unions since they were elected to government in 2003. Unions don't budge. They want the annual raise; they want the defined benefit pension plan. They support the Liberals to get it, and when asked to go slow, they say, "No way."

1540

Toronto municipal government has until recently been a talking piece for the union bosses. Then we had an election back on October 25. This bill is not—and I repeat, not—about setting blanket policies and outlawing all union collective bargaining; that's not what it's about. It's about ensuring that an essential service is afforded to the people of a city where that service is, indeed, essential; that's all it's about. Lest anybody say, "There goes Shurman. There goes the PC Party. They hate unions. We all know that," I'm a union member myself—have been for 40 years. I am not anti-union.

The NDP believes that this legislation will open the door to repeal the Trade Union Act. Don't believe that for one moment. What you should believe is that the NDP is funded largely by trade unions, so that's their message.

This is about making sure that that nurse who leaves her shift at midnight on Friday, expecting to get home, can get home. No matter what the dispute, she didn't cause it. It's about the young guy from Thornhill on a Friday night who counts on the TTC to get him home, not a \$40 cab ride that he either can't afford or hasn't even got the money in his pocket to pay for. Because he can't afford it, he needs the TTC.

Let's take a look at legal obligations to unions and talk a little bit about unions. This bill removes the restrictions placed on governments to bargain with the unions. Politicians have an obligation to account for public monies being spent. Politicians have to begin looking at something that has become a phrase of note in our world as it exists today.

Let's remember that the world we're talking about is a very different one than the one we looked at at the beginning of the mandate of this government—and I'm not talking about the first mandate; I'm talking about the one we're finishing this year: 2007. Things have changed.

What I'm talking about is the phrase, "Ability to pay." We're not going to be Wisconsin here in the province of Ontario, but that's about ability to pay. We're not going to be California here in Ontario, but that's about ability to pay. We have to be cognizant of the fact that, when we deal with unions or any workers, ability to pay plays a part.

We—and when I say "we," I speak for the taxpayers of my riding and, I believe, for taxpayers across the province of Ontario—are not an ATM that Dalton McGuinty or any other Premier of this province can go to any time he needs money. Union negotiations cannot dominate budgets, so this bill prevents needless spending in order to appease a small segment of the workforce. That's what it comes down to.

The thing that unions, at this point, are not getting and that they're going to have to understand is that there is a limited ability and that they are part of the population, too. The unions would have people believe that we don't show respect for their members; they're taxpayers, too. No, we get that, but it's a two-way street. Unlike, for example, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, ETFO, we support Mayor Ford's efforts to respect the taxpayers of Toronto by ensuring that the TTC operates in a fiscally responsible way, with stability and in the best interests of Ontarians.

I have a letter here from Sam Hammond, the president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. He has written to all of us, I am assuming. This one is addressed to me, and I'm going to read this letter into the record.

"I am writing to you on behalf of the 76,000 members of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario to let you know our opposition to Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission. Bill 150 declares the TTC an essential service and strips the right to strike from

TTC workers, members of the Amalgamated Transit Union.

"We urge you oppose the bill at every reading in the Legislature.

"There is no doubt the government is introducing this bill at the request of Toronto Mayor Rob Ford. In so doing, the government is pandering to right-wing voters in Toronto and abandoning the workers of this province."

I'll read the rest of the letter, but I'm going to interject at this point. How is it possible that Mr. Hammond can make the point that this is pandering to the right-wing voters of Toronto? Everybody knows that the voters of Toronto have traditionally been left-wing, and here we have a mayor who is considered more right of centre and who has won an overwhelming majority because people got tired of that. They get tired of pandering.

Continuing the letter: "Bill 150 was not necessary. The president of the ATU had already indicated his union would not strike during the next round of bargaining. The city manager and the general manager of the TTC are both on record as opposing the 'essential service' designation.

"Educators in this province will not tolerate this intrusion into free collective bargaining. We stand with members of the ATU in opposing Bill 150.

"We cannot let the rights of workers be threatened because a mayor or a political party decides to ride out a troubled economy on the backs of working people. Working people did not cause the global recession; that was caused by the greed of a few. Undermining fundamental worker rights, rights enshrined in the ILO covenant signed by Canada, is not an appropriate response.

"Again, we urge you to oppose this bill."

Sorry, Mr. Hammond; I can't oppose this bill. I speak for people, and in their numbers, in large majority, they don't buy that logic. What they see in a letter like that is arrogant entitlement, that you don't get 3%, give or take, every year, and a defined benefit pension plan that is limited to 30% of this province while 70% of the workers in this province have no entitlement whatsoever of that sort. They don't have a defined benefit pension plan. They probably, in most cases, don't have any pension plan at all, save and except for their RSPs. They have frozen salaries or they've taken a cut in salary, and as we read from polls in the public milieu, over 30% of Ontario families still, to this day, worry every single day about whether or not they'll have a job going forward. That's the reality, and it's those people, sir—it's those people, I say to all unions that are of that belief—who have to foot the bill for that ongoing entitlement. And you're the same unions who wouldn't budge an inch when Dalton McGuinty made a rather, I might say, mealy-mouthed attempt to get you to cut back a little bit and take one for the team like the rest of us are doing.

So I think that Ontarians—and we've seen it in the Toronto election: Torontonians have about had it up to here with that nonsense. Nobody's doing anything on the backs of workers. We believe that what we're looking at here, and this letter personifies it, is essentially a group of

people who see themselves as the new elite: "Don't you take away our entitlements. We're entitled to our entitlements." No. No. All of us had to take a hit, and you're going to have to take a bit of a hit too.

That's where I relate it back to ability to pay, and you'd better think about this closely, because perhaps you will say the Progressive Conservative Party has a particular stance that you don't like and has historically had that. Well, guess what? Over there is the Liberal Party. They brought in this legislation, and it's organizations like the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario that are putting money into the Working Families Coalition, which supports that government over there. So this is, one could conclude from that, not a Conservative perspective, it's a political perspective, because the landscape in this world has changed. That's what you're going to have to start saying to your members. I say that to unions.

Why do they think they are the only group of hard-working Ontarians? There's always an "us" and a "you," a "we" and a "they." I can tell you—and there's not a complaint to be ascribed to this—that I and every other person in this room have had a frozen salary for three years. No complaint. We did that. I and every other person in this room contribute to an RSP. That's our pension. People think there's some kind of a lifelong pension that's attached to being a member of this Legislature; not so. So we're not talking out of two sides of our mouth here. We live the words we say. Why would union members, then, in the public sector particularly, believe that they are entitled to large pensions, increases in huge benefit packages, and that the rest of us aren't?

1550

There's a need to understand that, essentially, what we're saying is there's no more money. The reason why you're seeing the upheaval in the United States at the state Legislature level—which I don't envision coming to our country because we have a different view of the world—is that they basically came to a conclusion and said, "We haven't got any more ability to pay." We use that term in discussing this; we use that term in labour contracts. But in these situations, like the one you're seeing in Wisconsin, like you're hearing out of New Jersey and out of California, what you're hearing is, "We can't do it." You're seeing towns in the United States where they're cutting police forces in half and leaving people in danger because they just don't have the ability to pay.

There is, as so many people have said in one level of government or another, only one taxpayer, and that taxpayer has been tapped out. There is a pie—call that the household income—that comes into every house. There's a little, tiny piece for a vacation, maybe, and a little, tiny piece for savings; a large piece that goes for food and shelter and clothing, possibly school expenses, the family car and insurance; and then there's no more pie. The only way to go to get more pie is if you go back to the taxpayers and push those magic buttons on the taxpayer

ATM that I talked about before. The taxpayer ATM is empty.

As was seen during the changes made to the Regulated Health Professions Act, when doctors and nurses were deemed essential services, the membership was supportive of this change. We would ask that unions start to understand that they're going to have to take their place with the rest of us and see it the same way.

There's precedent. Other jurisdictions have passed the kind of legislation that we're considering today. New York state would be an example. Essential services have to be taken for what they are: essential services.

In closing, let me say, continuing to use the example of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, because I think that—I don't mean to single them out, other than the fact that Mr. Hammond wrote the letter, but his organization, as new members of the Working Families Coalition, and other unions in that organization, other unions generally, believe this: They want us to believe that the rights of workers are somehow threatened by this legislation. We believe that if this bill is not passed, it's the rights of taxpayers, it's the rights of Ontarians that will be threatened. What this legislation serves to do is to protect the good of the many.

All we have to do is remember what happened when the TTC decided to shut down without warning. All we have to do is remember how we dealt with that on that particular day. The government called us back, we all came in, we sat here for half an hour and we sent them back to work. Why? Because there was an admission—not so tacit—that this was an essential service. Now the government has put before us government legislation in response to a city request because we concur with the government and we concur with the city that that, indeed, is what it is. When you shut down an essential service, how can that be considered just and fair?

This bill is not about greed, it is not about unions; it is about doing the right thing for the hard-working families of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The essential problem with the TTC and transit in Toronto relates to decisions made in the 1990s to cut funding for public transit, to dramatically reduce operating subsidies and capital supports, a decision that was not reversed by this government. It has led to a history of underinvestment, an aging of an asset. That underinvestment, that aging, has caused huge dislocation for the people of Toronto.

This government had committed to investing in a large-scale way in the TTC. I was there when the Premier made his MoveOntario announcement. But in the end, this government cut \$4 billion from Transit City—said it was deferred, but cut, in reality, \$4 billion from Transit City—and are now pandering to Rob Ford and his plan to deep-six a system of rapid transit in the city of Toronto.

If this government believes that in fact transit is an essential and critical service, then why isn't it putting money into transit that is needed to make it operate prop-

erly and efficiently, with due consideration for those who need that system?

This bill is a diversion from the fundamental failing of this government to put the money into transit, the investment into transit, that large cities need, not just for Toronto but for Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Windsor. Across this province transit is underfunded, and that causes problems with sprawl, with congestion. This government is trying to turn people's attention away from the critical issue of proper transit funding.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** So there goes the member for Thornhill saying he's not anti-union.

Now, the member and his colleagues support declaring the TTC an essential service, so I suggest to them that perhaps, instead of chewing up the Legislature's time, he and his colleagues might consider just passing on their time and letting the opponents talk themselves out so that we can vote on this bill and just move on.

I have some personal concerns about this bill and I have to admit that. I believe that if the city of Toronto, which operates the TTC, had not asked for this exact legislation, then we'd be debating something else today. But Toronto has a new mayor who seems to believe that it is him against them, and the unions are them—never mind that the TTC union had flat-out stated its intention to resolve its upcoming contract negotiations without a strike. Toronto's mayor may want to pander to right-wing voters, and he has a mandate to do so. Ontario, like it or not, does have a duty to do what a duly elected Toronto city council asks it to do concerning issues where jurisdiction is shared. So the member for Thornhill gets his rant and Toronto's mayor asks for Wisconsin-style, right-wing, union-busting legislation.

I may have to stand up and vote for something I don't like, but at least I'll know there is a review clause. Perhaps cooler heads in a future time will negotiate an agreement fairer to the taxpayer, to the citizens of Ontario and to the members of the Amalgamated Transit Union.

Employers usually get the unions they deserve. Personally, I hope this bill is not forever.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's a pleasure to make some comments on the speech—the very direct speech, I might add—from the member from Thornhill on Bill 150, which is An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission. Certainly, it's pretty clear where the member from Thornhill stands on it. He's supporting the bill, as our party is. I think we had an election in the city of Toronto where it was one of the key planks of the mayor who won an overwhelming majority.

The member from Thornhill also talked about the disparity we're seeing between those in the public-sector, mainly unionized workforce, as compared to those who are not. I would simply say that this government has been

irresponsible in the past number of years in light of the realities of the fiscal situation in the province of Ontario and around the world, where we had this big recession in 2008. Yet despite that, the government went on to sign contracts with 3% to 5% increases in pay despite the fact that the government's in a big financial hole.

We'll be supporting this. I think we need to face the reality that, as the member from Thornhill pointed out, the family pie is used up and that families who are paying the bills need to be respected and need to see some relief. We're supporting this bill so that those who depend on the TTC will, in fact, be able to count on it—millions of people around the city of Toronto—when they need to use that service.

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** At the outset, I, with some caution, respectfully welcome the support of our Conservative colleagues the MPPs from Thornhill as well as Parry Sound–Muskoka with reference to Bill 150. If I might for a moment paraphrase Michael Corleone, who said keep your friends close but, perhaps, your Conservatives even closer.

Having said that, I do think the MPP from Thornhill quite rightly cited the importance of the TTC not only locally to his own riding of Thornhill but, of course, broadly. We've spoken already in this House about the incredible importance of the social, economic, environmental and health and well-being that is really dependent on the TTC. We've talked about, for example, the extraordinary ridership on a daily basis, something on the order of 1.5 million rides per day. We've made reference already to the economic impact: Estimates are that about \$50 million in economic activity is lost due to TTC strikes.

I appreciate as well the support of the Conservative Party and, by the way, the NDP on that fateful Sunday, as the MPP from Thornhill quite rightly cited, when we as the government, as stewards of the public good, convened an emergency session and extracted, elicited, sought and got agreement from all parties. I believe it was a more or less unanimous decision that day to legislate the TTC back. I think that's really a hint of foreshadowing, if you will, of the idea that the TTC is ultimately an essential service for the city and the province of Ontario.

There is a number of other issues, for example regarding some of the clauses of arbitration, some of the nuances there. Perhaps I'll have an opportunity to speak to those later on. I do welcome the support, however it's phrased in fire and brimstone, from the Conservatives.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Thornhill has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'd like to thank the members for Toronto–Danforth, Mississauga–Streetsville, Parry Sound–Muskoka and Etobicoke North for their comments.

In the case of the member for Toronto–Danforth, he says that the TTC's problems are really about 1990s decisions concerning an aging asset of infrastructure. I would respectfully point out that that has got very little to do with TTC wages, what they look like. It's not particularly germane, though he may be right; I don't disagree. The transit needs funding, but it needs a new funding formula.

The member from Mississauga–Streetsville always seems to stand up and comment when I make presentations to this Legislature: Why don't you just sit down, take responsibility for your own government for once, and don't preach to me? At least I know who I am.

As far as my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka, he restates that we had an election result here in Toronto which I talked about at length. He restated the issue of the disparity between public sector unions and the rest of us, to which he's quite entitled and correct.

I thank very much my friend from Etobicoke North for also nodding in the direction of the fabric of this city and what the TTC means with regard to holding it together.

I did refer to the Working Families Coalition during the course of my debate. I want to point out, for those people who are watching on television, that the Working Families Coalition is an association of unions, of public sector unions, that want to keep their entitlements. They want to, at all costs, keep their entitlements, and see the way to doing that as keeping the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty in power. There are millions and millions of dollars, and ultimately they go back to your taxes, that have been collected as union dues that are going into television commercials trying to tell you that that's the only government to support.

That government, at least, has finally seen the light with this legislation as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I am looking forward to speaking to this issue. The role of unions in our broader society has been of interest to me for many, many years. My approach to this is, perhaps, going to be a little different because I want to start off by saying that, in fact, I believe in unions, and I support the union movement.

I think a little bit of history is in order. The union movement really took off in the 1930s, and it took off in the 1930s for some very, very good reasons. There were very difficult and extreme conditions. The unions in North America and the UK—and in the UK even earlier, in the 1920s, around the turn of the century—helped workers to organize. They helped workers get better working conditions, better wages and better lives for their families. They made a major contribution to improving life generally across the board for all of those societies in which they became active.

That's the tradition that we have, and that's something that I believe in strongly. However, there's a qualification there, and that qualification, in my view, is this: Unions, governments, private sector companies—really

all the institutions in our society have to comport themselves in the public interest.

This morning in the *Globe and Mail*, I read a column by the journalist Margaret Wentz. She spoke at some length on this issue. Indeed, the points that she made I read about yesterday in some of the American financial papers having to do with the situation in Wisconsin and others. I want to quote a sentence that she used in her column because I think it puts this whole thing in context about why this legislation is essential, why we have to move forward with legislation that makes the TTC an essential service and effectively takes away the right to strike.

This was what she said in the column this morning: "The dynamic between public-sector unions and government is completely different from the one between private-sector unions and business." That's an essential point that we've got to keep in mind here.

The private sector unions—the unions at GM, the unions at the XYZ manufacturing company and so on—their relationship, their negotiation, their tension, if you will, their creative tension is between the private sector union and the owners and shareholders of the business. That really is a private relationship.

Now we look at public sector unions. Their relationship or tension or interaction is between the public sector union and government or an agency of government or an institution set up by government. For purposes of the debate today, the Toronto Transit Commission is a public utility. It's an agency of government, if you will. The distinction between the two, private sector unions versus owners and shareholders in the private relationship and public sector unions versus a government or an agency of government—the principal responsibility in that second relationship is the public interest. Both the unions and, in this case, the TTC, when they're developing the dynamics of that relationship, have always got to keep in mind the public interest.

What is the public interest here that needs protecting? I say that the public interest that needs protecting here is really the ability of the TTC to provide uninterrupted service at all times for all of the people in the GTA who need to get around, keep their jobs, get their children to school, and keep the local GTA economy on a strong footing.

In that regard, we should keep in mind some of the facts surrounding the TTC. For instance, 1.5 million people every business day use the TTC. It's somewhat lower on the weekends. The TTC is the third-largest transit system in North America. New York City is first, and then Mexico. The 1.5 million people that use the TTC every business day, that total, is equal to the number of people who live in London, Hamilton, Kitchener, Windsor and Sudbury combined.

1610

There's the student who takes the bus to get to school; the single mom who doesn't have a car but needs to get to work and provide for her kids. There are thousands of riders who can't afford the time and money to drive and

park downtown. There are the many who know that fewer cars on the road is better for our environment, better for our health. There are the young people who use transit at night in order to get home safely from the downtown entertainment areas. There are the tourists that come to Toronto and depend on access to transit in order to get around, to visit the city and get a sense of the flavour of Toronto. There are all of those needs that, in my judgment, constitute the public interest, and that public interest ought not to be subjected to the to-and-fro of a strike situation or a negotiation that is likely to lead to a strike situation.

Those are some of the facts that I say create a strong public interest that needs protecting. I come back to my earlier point about the distinction between private sector unions and private sector entities, businesses—the owners of the businesses and the shareholders of the business—and the public service unions, whose relationship retention is with government or agencies or arms of the government such as the TTC.

Interestingly enough, obviously, the city of Toronto recognizes that as a public interest. We in this Legislature only have to think back—I think it has been two occasions since I've been here, since 2003—to where that tension between the TTC and the public service union governing the employees of the TTC union broke down, a strike situation developed, and we in this Legislature, all parties, recognizing that the public interest needed to be protected, acted quickly. We acted within a matter of a day or days to restore public transit, to continue to protect that public interest.

There is a widespread sense from really all members of this Legislature, because on each of those occasions, if memory serves me correctly, all parties voted together. It was a unanimous vote to protect the public interest by ordering the TTC workers back to work. So, obviously, as a matter of logic, we recognize protecting the ability and the right, if you will, of the people of the GTA, and in particular Toronto, to use the TTC. We recognize that as a public interest, and we've recognized it in the past as a public interest.

The city of Toronto has come to the same conclusion. The city of Toronto, through a vote—the new city of Toronto council and the new mayor—in effect has said that there is a public interest that needs protecting here. The public interest is the right of the people of the city of Toronto and the GTA to access public transit for all of the reasons that I said before: the single mother trying to get her kids to school, the employee trying to get himself or herself to work, the senior citizen trying to get to medical appointments etc. This isn't just a matter of hundreds or thousands of people; this is 1.5 million people a day, the third-largest public transit system in North America after New York City and Mexico City. So the city of Toronto, which has a council and a mayor who were elected by the people of the city of Toronto, has recognized that the public wants that public interest protected.

If that bargaining relationship between the union and the TTC breaks down, the public interest will suffer, in the sense that the public transportation system is shut down and all of those 1.5 million people are out there, stuck. They can't carry on with the things that they have to carry on with in their day-to-day lives to protect their families, to earn their livelihoods and so on.

The province, as the senior level of government relative to the city of Toronto and the only government body that can bring in legislation to answer the request of the city of Toronto to protect that public interest, has acquiesced, has recognized that, yes, on the recommendation of the city of Toronto, we are prepared to do what we have to do to protect the public interest. We take it a step further and we say, "Because we're prepared to do as you want"—that is, eliminate the right to strike in the public interest—"we, too, are recognizing that the public interest needs protection, and we, as a province, are prepared to do our piece in conjunction with the city of Toronto to recognize that public interest."

Let me say a few words about the legislation itself. First of all, let me say something about essential services, because the rationale for eliminating the right to strike in a relationship between a public sector union and government or an agency of government is that an essential service has to be protected. The obvious examples—and we all accept these examples, and we've governed ourselves for years and years. Strikes and lockouts have been limited or prohibited, many in a number of public services.

In Ontario, we've got three general approaches to how we protect an essential service. For the purposes of my comments, I'm saying that my premise is that the right to keep the TTC operating and providing public transportation services is an essential service.

In the past, police, fire and hospital services were subject to a blanket prohibition on work stoppages. That makes sense. You can't have the police on strike because, obviously, all sorts of bad things could happen. You can't have the firemen on strike because, obviously, all sorts of bad things can happen. And you can't have hospital services on strike because all kinds of bad things could happen if they were. Those bad things are things that happen to people who need and require police protection and regulation, who need the protection of fire departments and who need hospital services.

A second approach is that legislation governing ambulance workers and some other crown employees allows for strikes and lockouts to occur, subject to certain aspects of the services subject to public service agreements. Police, fire, hospitals: Essential service applies across the board. Other public services, unions and their relationship with the government agencies: There are certain defined types of work within that relationship that are subject to essential services.

Effectively, the third approach is that when a public service union goes on strike, and the Legislature decides in its wisdom that there's an essential service that needs protection, we come back to this Legislature and, on an

ad hoc basis, on an individual strike and so on, legislate them back to work.

I think there's no doubt that a sound argument has been made, can be made, will continue to be made that public transportation in a jurisdiction like Toronto and the GTA is an essential service. I've covered the reasons why I say that's the case, and I think there is broad public support out there for the idea that public transportation in a jurisdiction like Toronto is an essential service.

An important aspect of the legislation is the role of an arbitrator, because when the government takes away a public service union's right to strike in order to advance its interests or settle tension between it and its employer, there has to be something else in place. What else is in place of the right to strike here?

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Well, it's arbitrated awards. The legislation contemplates that the bargaining relationship between the public service union and the TTC will continue, the union will continue to exist, and all the other rights of the union will be there except the right to strike. They will continue in their bargaining relationship, they may reach an agreement, and the agreement will be in place for the term of the agreement—a few years usually. All of the usual things in the agreement will be set out, and that will govern their relationship.

But in the event that they can't come to an agreement about the terms of the relationship between the public sector union and the TTC, then an arbitrator is appointed. The arbitrator steps in, listens to what the union has to say, listens to what the employer has to say, and settles a number of questions: the terms and conditions of the work, the wages and so forth and so on. That decision of the arbitrator is binding on both parties: the union and the employer.

The legislation is unique in that it sets out some parameters for the role of the arbitrator, the function of the arbitrator. In issuing the award—that is, the settlement to govern this employer-employee relationship—the arbitrator has to take into consideration—let me just go through a number of factors here: the employer's ability to pay in light of its fiscal situation; the extent to which services may have to be reduced, in light of the decision or award, if current funding and taxation levels are not increased; the economic situation in Ontario and the city of Toronto; a comparison, as between the employees and other comparable employees in the public and private sectors, of the terms and conditions of employment and the nature of the work performed; the employer's ability to attract and retain qualified employees; and the purposes of the Public Sector Dispute Resolution Act.

Any idea that this legislation has set up a regime whereby we're eliminating the right to strike and giving the arbitrator the right to decide the agreement, the deal between the employer and the employees, is an overstatement, because as I just outlined, there are a number of constraints. There is a context in which the arbitrator has to present his award. He has to generally keep in mind the employer's ability to pay, he has to keep in

mind the economic situation in Ontario and in the city of Toronto, and he has to keep in mind what other comparable employees are getting paid and so on. The point here is that the arbitrator's award has to be in the context of what our societal expectations are of various other employer-employee relationships. That's a good thing.

So we have the best of both worlds here. We have a world now, if this legislation is passed, in which strikes at TTC are not permitted, the public interest is protected, and the people of Toronto and the GTA can get on with their lives without having the anxiety of not being able to get around in the event of a strike. In terms of the city and the employer and the employees, we have the fairness of an arbitrator's award, and we have set out the parameters or the context in which the arbitrator is to approach a decision. That is a solution that protects the public interest.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I listened with interest to my friend from Willowdale, who made a number of good points. I want to pick out one suggestion that he made about the right of people to use the system to go and earn their livelihood, and I couldn't agree more. It brought to mind a time, probably most of 20 years ago, when I owned and operated a then-small business in downtown Toronto. It was a 7/24 business, and it depended on clerical staff who had to use the TTC to get to and from work—almost entirely 100% of them. As well, it happened simultaneously with a postal strike.

I had no cash flow coming in, and because it was so heavily clerical, we went hand to mouth on the money. We had workers who couldn't get to work without having mass transportation, the TTC. The only way to keep my doors open was to spend my day travelling to and from the homes of my employees, picking them up and delivering them—that's what I did—and also, in between, going to pick up cheques so that we could keep the doors open.

I don't think that my situation was singular. I had the right to earn a livelihood, all of those people who worked with me had the right to their livelihood, and it was public sector unions that were holding them to ransom, through no fault of their own whatsoever. That's what we're talking about today. I speak with experience on this, and I applaud the member for recognizing that.

I have one other comment for my friend from Willowdale, and also for the Liberal side. You seem somewhat ill at ease with this legislation, my friends, and seem to be working pretty hard to justify it. Don't. There's a reason why your government brought it in. There's a reason why you're going to stand up and vote for it. There's a reason why we're here, agreeing with you that this is a good idea: because it really is in the public interest.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I listened to my friend from Willowdale make his comments, and I don't agree with him. I'm going to leave it at that, because I like him too much to expose the—

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Now, there's a first.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** No, he means well. He's got a good intellect and he did his best, weaving and bobbing on this one. As a lawyer, I'm sure he's done that in front of many a judge, and like most lawyers know, you don't win them all. This was another one of those days for my dear colleague from Willowdale.

But having said that, this has all become rather moot, because I've been served with a notice of motion for a time allocation on this bill, Bill 150. We have now reached the 6.5-hour second reading debate time, where, pursuant to this government's standing orders—the ones they designed for themselves—they can call a time allocation motion. I suspect they will. I don't know whether they'll let my colleagues from Kenora–Rainy River or Mr. Tabuns here from Toronto–Danforth speak to it or not, but it remains that second reading is, in all effect, wrapped up.

There will be two short days of committee hearings: Wednesday, March 9, and Monday, March 21. On March 23, there will be a truncated day of clause-by-clause consideration; at 5 o'clock, it's all wrapped up, all motions deemed to have been put. They will be voted on—and then a mere one hour allocated for third reading.

Not only do we have one of the most dramatic reversals of long and hard-earned labour rights in this province being rammed through the Legislature; we have a government that's not even got the gumption to defend its own position.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comment?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's a pleasure to follow the very thoughtful discourse by my colleague from Willowdale, whose expertise, certainly in legal affairs, transcends this. I hope people paid attention to his very well-measured, carefully-reasoned comments, because they fairly reflect the comments of a lot of people who are affected by the TTC and whether a labour dispute does or doesn't happen.

In passing comment on the member's discourse, I point out that, being from the 905 belt, we too are affected by a TTC labour dispute. One of the things that definitely affects us is that, if you've got to get into the city of Toronto, a TTC labour dispute means that you run into instant gridlock. Not merely at the Etobicoke Creek or up at the northern border or down at the eastern border, but all over the GTA, traffic just comes to a complete halt.

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Whether or not I think this is the best way or the only way, it still remains that this is the way that a duly elected city council in the city of Toronto has asked us to share the jurisdiction over the Toronto Transit Commission, which I accept. Of course, any labour discussions or bargaining issues have to happen between the

city of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission and its unions. While we in the Legislature have been asked to pass this particular piece of legislation, ultimately its jurisdiction, its enforcement and—as I said a little bit earlier, employers tend to get the unions that they deserve—the climate of labour relations will rest between the city, the TTC and the unions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Bill 150 is obviously causing the Liberal government significant unease. They see that there's significant agreement within this House on passing this bill, but what do they do today? They've filed a time allocation motion on something that there's significant agreement in the House on. Why do they want to do this? Of course, they want to do this to suffocate discussion and debate on this bill. They want to suffocate the discussion on the amendments after second reading. This Liberal government is being completely disingenuous with the people of Ontario and the people of Toronto with this bill. We can see what's happening here. They're only allocating one hour of debate for third reading: one hour of debate.

Why would this Liberal government want to hide from the people of Ontario? Why do they want to hide? The government House leader wants to hide from the people of Ontario what their real intentions are, what they're really trying to achieve with this bill, and I think this Liberal government must begin to act honestly and come clean with the people of Ontario.

This time allocation motion is nothing but a slap to their supporters, nothing but a slap to the people of Ontario, nothing but a slap to the members of this Legislative Assembly, and it's just indicative of the contempt that this Liberal Party has for democracy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Willowdale has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Just let me respond to the criticism about the time allocation. The fact of the matter is that we are going to have public hearings. Today is March 1. The current collective agreement expires on March 31. Time is of the essence here. We're going to have public hearings, we're going to have further debate, and we're going to get this legislation behind us so that, come the end of this month, the end of March, the parties can start to think about how they're going to govern their relationship. Hopefully, the parties will be able to sort out their relationship in this next month without the assistance of an arbitrator, which would be available sometime after March 31 if they can't.

Since 2003, we've legislated the TTC back to work twice. There's broad public support in Toronto, in the broader GTA. The public support that this has is quite clear. We're going to move effectively on this. If this legislation passes, the way the parameters are established for the work of the arbitrator, it's going to be fair for the city of Toronto, it's going to be fair for the employees and it's going to be fair for the public. When you take

that all into account, the public interest is best protected with this—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will, therefore, be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** We have no further debate.  
*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour say “aye.”

All those opposed say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until Wednesday at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1636.*

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Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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AZON  
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No. 88

N° 88

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 2 March 2011**

**Mercredi 2 mars 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 March 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 mars 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Hindu prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission, when Bill 150 is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government; and

That the vote on second reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet on Wednesday, March 9, 2011, and Monday, March 21, 2011, during its regular meeting times for public hearings and be authorized to meet on Wednesday, March 23, 2011, during its regular meeting times for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 4 p.m. on Tuesday, March 22, 2011. At 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 23, 2011, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment for clause-by-clause consideration on Wednesday, March 23, 2011. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Thursday, March 24, 2011. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill

shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on General Government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a pleasure this morning to be able to speak again on Bill 150. I think I've pretty well said everything I had to say on that bill, actually, but I will do the very best I can.

The reason is, I think, in a broader sense, if you look at the bill itself, what it really does is remove the right to strike from transit workers in Toronto, at the request of the new mayor of Toronto. Mayor Ford was elected overwhelmingly, with a mandate to bring some semblance of order to the city of Toronto. I think it's a complicated issue in Toronto in terms of—I know people who live here. It's a wonderful city. It's the best city in Canada, I guess, by my interpretation.

What they've got is a terrific assessment base in Toronto. They have the Hummingbird Centre and the Rogers Centre, or whatever it's called, and all these industrial-commercial taxes that really don't create students for the school system or people in the parks. People come here to go to the theatre and, as was said, some of the best universities—the University of Toronto, where I attended years ago. The point is, those institutions that provide either payments in lieu or direct taxes to the economy don't create people.

When you look on the residential tax side, this is where the issue is. This is important. Their tax assessment base is about 60% industrial-commercial—the big bank towers. They have a pretty high property and business tax base on that industrial-commercial, restaurants

etc. That pays for all the services, generally, that they have.

The residential tax, on the other hand—Mr. Speaker, you would know this, having served municipally as well—in Toronto is quite low. It is; it's actually lower than Durham's. Yet they have Handi-Transit at the door, more or less, which is appropriate; I don't disagree with it. My point is, I don't think they tax the residential side very highly in Toronto.

My son, who was working at a law firm in downtown Toronto—his wife had a very good job here as well—lived in the Beaches. It's a lovely neighbourhood: wonderful, beautiful, neighbourly, friendly etc. I remember when they moved from Nova Scotia, where they were living. He went to law school there. The house was quite small, actually.

The point I'm trying to make is this: They paid about \$400,000 or \$450,000 for it, or something like that—I think they sold it for \$700,000—but their taxes were less than those for my house in the country. You know what I mean? I'm serious. Their taxes were half of mine. I was living in the country, just outside Bowmanville, in a house on five acres. I had my own well and my own septic. My taxes were over \$7,000, my point being—

**Interjection:** Get a smaller house.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, I have five kids. It was a big house. But here's the point; the point is this—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm trying to help you through this.

Peter, you should be listening. You're a young fella; you probably don't know these things.

The issue is this: They've got to look at the tax base on the residential side in Toronto. People should pay their fair share. Then you get into the affordability issue, and I often talk about the—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order.  
0910

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Speaker, if you could—sometimes they don't want to hear the truth.

What is my point here? The city of Toronto is fighting over having essential services in transit. I understand that. They're really going out of their way to make it absolutely awkward for anybody with a car. You can't park here. They've got these bike lanes. It's just incredible; there's nobody in them. They've congested traffic so it is really uncomfortable to have a car in Toronto.

What's this bill about? It's all about turning Toronto into a highly concentrated—I missed one part; I've got to back up a little bit. How Toronto is fixing its tax base is this: They've run out of space—there are no more vacant lots—so what they're doing is knocking down a house and building 50 houses on top of each other, called a condo. Each one of those condos on that lot is going to pay around \$4,000 to \$5,000 in taxes. So rather than having one house paying \$5,000, they're going to have 50 houses on top of each other, called a condo. That is what is happening.

We're turning into an intensified redevelopment, with people jammed in, sort of like in China or in Hong Kong. They have jammers in Hong Kong to get people into the bus; they push them in. So quality of life might be at risk here; I'm not sure. But Billy Elliot: great theatre. I saw it myself. I would say it has things to offer people who can afford to live here.

But the real point of this is, I've looked through—there's a good article I'd recommend to people on how much we're going to be spending on transit. I sort of live in the rural part of Durham. I'm proud to represent Uxbridge; Scugog, which is primarily Port Perry; and Clarington, whose main cities are Bowmanville and Newcastle. We do have transit there, although I have to have a car to get to the transit. I can't get a bus to go to the GO train. I've got to take the car to the bus and the bus to the GO train. It's hardly integrated. You've got to leave for work at about 5 o'clock to get here at 8 o'clock. I'm not kidding; I commute. I didn't this morning; I stayed over last night because I was at the ROMA convention.

But my point is this: I looked at this report, and I think Premier McGuinty, with all due respect, has completely screwed up or messed up—whatever word you want to use—the transit system. What he has done is outsource it, so he can't get blamed, to a group called Metrolinx.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Look what you got with the 407.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Whatever. We'll get to that, Jean-Marc.

In the very little time I have to speak, I've got three major topics that I've got to get on here. One is to link Toronto's tax issues to the transit issue. Transit is not free. Transit around the world is very heavily subsidized—very heavily subsidized. That's Toronto's plan. Don't come whining all the time to Premier McGuinty, or whoever the Premier happens to be, for the extra \$100 million to balance your budget.

When I looked at it—I was transportation critic when, I think, Mr. Bradley was the minister. I met with Rob MacIsaac, who at that time was the head of Metrolinx, and Metrolinx was coming up with the Transit City plan. Then the issue became electrification versus diesel power for the transit system. In the long run it's clear, for the environment and for efficiency, that transit should be electrified, but it's a significant change in how things are done.

We started looking into the Metrolinx plan for the GTA—I think the report was called the Big Move. Listen up: Here's a really important thing that people have got to know. It's sort of like the renewable energy bill, Bill 150: Show me the money. Sometimes these are good decisions. All debt is not bad. I wouldn't own a house if I wasn't able to have a mortgage. All debt is not bad. But here's the deal: Operational spending is where the issue is. Metrolinx wants, every single year, an additional \$5 billion.

Let's put this in perspective. We already have about a \$20-billion hole in the ground, and we're going to

commit to another \$5 billion? I don't think so, unless you're going to borrow it from the children, because debt is future taxes. You have to either reduce your spending, which means you have to cut service, you have to grow your economy—the economy is as flat as water on a plate—or you have to increase taxes on people who are already almost underwater on tax: the HST, eco tax, you name it.

Now, one would just say, what are our priorities? I think we've got the priorities wrong. First of all, stop doing these things that are just popular. You know what I mean? It's like when computers first came out, but the computers that came out later are faster, better, smarter and cheaper. Solar panels is a good example. They're diving into solar power at 80 cents a kilowatt hour. It's unbelievable. These solar panels will be integrated into shingles within five years, and everybody will have them on their homes. Right now they're spending millions on photovoltaic panels. They're going too fast without thorough investigation and review.

This transit plan—I'm going to give you one example of the waste that's made by not actually planning and thinking. Eighty per cent of any job is planning it. Eighty per cent of theirs is spending it, and 20% is planning.

They screwed up the Green Energy Act. Who is opposed to renewable energy? Nobody.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** You are.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** See? In fact, they mislead people by telling them things that are false, lies.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** There are a couple of things here. I think, first, we should watch our language. Second, we should attempt to speak to the issue that's at hand—and I know you're trying to do that.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Speaker. The Minister of Agriculture should put a few solar panels in the agricultural communities.

My point is this: On the transit thing, I think, again, they've made another error. The error shows up on the tax bill. I'm going to put it out; it's an article by the *Globe and Mail*, dated February 19th—and by the way, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I'm speaking to a time allocation motion. This is shutting down debate, terminating input on this important—the galleries were full of transit workers who, respectfully, have the right to negotiate settlements. I'm completely in favour of that. Now they're just kind of putting their foot on their chest and saying, "We're going to take that right away from you." This time allocation—we're going to have an hour to speak. I've got 40 minutes this morning, because nobody else wants to speak on it.

This article says, "Revised Transit Blueprint Taking Shape

"Early signs point to Queen's Park, Metrolinx agreeing to Ford's altered plan for transit in Toronto....

"Metrolinx [is] agreeing to Mayor Rob Ford's revised plan for transit in Toronto....

"The old network's first phase—which was fully funded by the provincial and federal governments"—that's

the same taxpayer; who are we kidding? You know what I mean? It's a shell game. It's sort of like at the carnival.

It says here, "Mr. Ford campaigned on burying all new transit lines." That probably makes sense, really. There's no more space, and you're going to have trains running up and down.

"The province and Metrolinx agreed to seek a compromise on the condition they don't have to kick in more than the \$8.15 billion they'd already promised." That's the province that is promising \$8.15 billion.

"As for Eglinton, Metrolinx has awarded an \$80-million contract for concrete tunnel liners and a \$42-million contract for the design of seven stations on the 11-kilometre stretch....

"Our basis for going ahead at this point is our confidence that the tunnelled section between Jane and Laird appears to be in everybody's plan for moving forward," said Bruce McCuaig, the president of Metrolinx."

**0920**

Bruce McCuaig was an assistant deputy minister at the Ministry of Transportation: another civil servant who's probably got a pension from there and now has got an appointment to Metrolinx—I don't think so.

Here's the real key, and I'm going to read it because it's that important; it needs to be on the record. "The Metrolinx board voted Friday to spend \$53 million (U.S.) on twelve vehicles built by the American arm" of a Japanese company, "Sumitomo Corp." Actually, it's probably a division of Samsung; they gave them \$7 billion. I don't know where they're getting all the money.

"The deal includes an option to buy six more at \$22 million." So, six of them are \$22 million; figure out the numbers yourself. They got such a great deal. This was an untendered contract where they spent almost \$100 million for diesel trains. This isn't finished. This is the waste.

"Metrolinx piggybacked on a competitive tender ... by Sonoma-Marine county in California ... that knocked down the price from an earlier ... \$100 million" to the numbers I just read.

"It's given us a wonderful result in terms of the cost," said Rob Prichard. Rob Prichard is the chair of Metrolinx. He's the past president of the University of Toronto. He was also—I mean, they're all connected.

Here's the deal: Now they've promised—I'll cut this short, because it is related—to electrify. The reason they're buying these trains is for the Pan American Games in 2015. They want to have sort of clean transit. But after that, they're going to cancel those \$100-million trains and electrify them, and they've committed to electrify the GO system.

Why are they throwing good money after bad money? That's waste, and it's a lot to do with the TTC, because Bob can't connect the dots. They haven't got a plan; that's the plan.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I would say that if someone says I have no plan, they're saying something that doesn't need to be said, because I'm not the leader. Our leader does have a plan.

But I'll tell you what I am planning. This whole business, to me, of what they've messed up—I've got two meetings tomorrow. My riding is blessed to have the Oak Ridges moraine, almost right through my riding. It's beautiful: the vista of Toronto—wonderful. I do believe it should be protected; I always have. In fact, when I was a councillor, years ago, I was on the conservation authority. The NDP actually didn't recognize the Oak Ridges moraine; Mike Harris did.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, he did. Anyway, we won't get into a conversation with the House leader. She should be reading up on this afternoon's business.

The point being, I'm going to have a meeting. What's happened recently is that a company is rehabilitating an abandoned pit. There are pits and quarries all over the moraine; you know that. The pit is being filled up by a company called Earthworx, and that company is being challenged in court on March 11 by the mayor and council of the township of Scugog; the new mayor, Chuck Mercier. I met with him this week at ROMA. They are going to court to resolve this issue about whether the fill that's going into the moraine is clean. The reason is, the moraine is 12 feet from the aquifer, which is the water that feeds to homes and families. I read a statement in the House yesterday about a family who are refusing to drink their water now.

The reason I bring this up is because Mayor Gerri Lynn O'Connor, from the town of Uxbridge, is convening a meeting with the Ministry of the Environment and other stakeholders to get to the roots.

What I'm doing is I'm issuing a private member's bill, which I'm sure will eventually become law. I know it will be, because it's the right thing to do. After working with various groups—agronomists and all these experts—we've come up with a plan that would mandate that provincially zoned land, like the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt, has rules and regulations around the appropriate fill for these large aggregate resources that have been mined out. All the gravel has been taken out and there are these big holes in the earth that form apertures right into the aquifers of the water that's the very essence of life. It's not overbearing; it's just to make sure that we're not putting brownfield, dirty fill into these holes. Sure, we've got to move fill—I understand that—and make those grades proper so that they don't expose the aquifer. That's the one meeting.

The second meeting that I'm having is with Clarington Wind Concerns. They have Dr. Robert McMurtry, who I believe is the dean of medicine at the University of Western Ontario, who believes—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Durham, I'm sure this is going to lead to the matter that is before us.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I hope so.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I do, too.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm trying to work it back to Bill 150.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** You're not doing a very good job.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm going to work toward that goal.

The other meeting—I hope to be taking transit to the meeting, by the way. There you go.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, I do. I take the GO train. I use the TTC all the time. I'm not one of these rich, arrogant snobs riding around in a government-paid car.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I've asked you, just keep the language parliamentary, please.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I take transit, and we'll leave it at that, because it's the right thing to do. In fact, being a senior, I carry around carefully my little transit—on the TTC, you get one of for seniors; you get a discount rate. You get a discount rate on everything because you've got less time than everyone else.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** You can go to Zellers for breakfast. It's what my grandmother used to do.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, I think Zellers has been closed. It has been bought out—you know that—by some US firm.

My point being, though, is that there are three huge issues in my riding. Some of them are related to transit, so it does tie back, Mr. Speaker. The one I mentioned is that the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt need to be protected.

The second one is the wind energy. I appreciate Premier McGuinty backtracking on the offshore wind turbines. He sort of cancelled them. They'll be sued by the companies that have invested. Hundreds of millions of dollars will be spent in court and in settlements. It's the same as when they cancelled for Kevin Flynn the gas plant in Oakville, but he's moving it—I know exactly where they're moving it—to Cambridge. TransCanada PipeLines is going to build it and drop the lawsuit against the government. If people only knew that they're not planning these things. They're wasting money, not just in court but in settlements. It's unbelievable.

Wind energy, in the appropriate place, with the appropriate setbacks, has an appropriate application for renewable energy, but I don't want one beside my house. No one does. Dr. McMurtry is an expert; none of us here are. Yes, there are three doctors here who aren't in cabinet, and they should be in cabinet. The member from Oak Ridges—Markham was a medical officer of health for York region. I can't understand why she's not the Minister of Health. It doesn't make any sense to me. But, again, Dr. McMurtry is going to be appearing in the community, and he's going to be giving his view on the health risks to the people of Ontario. I hope Premier McGuinty listens. And his minister Brad Duguid: I don't think he has a clue on the file, personally. He reads the notes well.

The third issue is the 407. Here's the deal on this one: The 407—and the member from Peterborough knows as well—is a broken promise. It's the most disturbing of all the promises. I've talked about the failure in Metrolinx.

I've talked about the Green Energy Act and the failures there. Now the third failure is this transit package.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Durham has talked about almost everything except the point that's before us today. Please, I have no choice. The standing order says I have to call you to speak to that bill. Thank you.

0930

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm going to tie this back to the frustration of being in opposition and not being given the chance to speak on Bill 150. Mr. Marchese gets it; he gets it. He appreciates it.

This bill here: He is sort of tying it back to the transit issue; it's the 407. Our transit is missing, okay? Our transit in rural Ontario is basically roads and cars. Not everybody lives in Toronto. We've got to start thinking about Ontario. The people in Timmins don't get it. Do you understand? They belong and they deserve the same health care, the same long-term care as people living in—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Hey, John, tell them how much you want the bill.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, the bill itself—Rosario, I'm going to save you some time.

The other part, though, that I need to finish is that during the election the 407 was promised to the region of Durham and to the cities of Oshawa, Clarington, Whitby, Ajax, Pickering, Uxbridge and Brock—promised to all of them. They designed their official plans around it. If you look at their official plans, there's this ribbon; it's called the 407. The plan was there. What did they do? They tore up the plan. That's true—the cynicism.

I am going to get back to this time allocation, because it's the very tip of the iceberg. What I'm speaking of is what's below the surface: the trouble I have, the cynicism I feel, the rejection, the lack of concern. The Premier is one of the nicest fellows I've ever met, but he has lost his way. He's somehow been beaten up by all the demands on him by the educators and the public sector wanting more money. He's been beaten up. He has given away as much as he possibly can to settle all these disputes. He has tried to write a cheque to solve every problem. What has he done? We've increased spending. We're now spending \$116 billion, and that's why this bill here—now they're in the panic mode. They're time-allocating bills; they're cancelling projects. They cancelled offshore wind. They're starting to move around in a confused fashion.

I'm quite concerned. I think that October can't come soon enough. We need to have change. I know that our leader, Tim Hudak, a young, enthusiastic, honest family man—I know in 10 years he'll be worn out. All he needs is about 10 years in that job—and that's what Premier McGuinty is doing—and he'll be handing off the reins of power to someone else. But that 407 promise: Can you imagine stopping it at Simcoe Street in Oshawa? Simcoe Street in Oshawa is right where the university is, the University of Ontario. You can't get to—Bob, you're an excellent goalie—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm looking at standing order 23(b), that directs a member to direct his speech to the topic under discussion. While it's a very interesting discourse, it has little to do with the time allocation motion or the TTC.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** You, I believe, have a valid point of order that I've tried to call the member for Durham to. The member for Durham, please.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Okay. This is actually quite interesting, because the time allocation motion does say at the very end that when they cut off the debate on Bill 150—and now we're into the time allocation; I'll have to segue back at some point to the 407 discussion—that the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk should be 4 o'clock on March 22. The reason for that is we're here next week, then we're off for a week. If you look at your calendar—and people should pick up one of my business cards, because my business card has a calendar on the back which is very useful.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Send one over.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'll send one over.

If you're looking at it, we're off the week of the 14th, then we come back. So anybody who wants to put in amendments—I would say that transit workers, who were here, the TTC board and other players in transit—here's the deal: I'm wondering what other transit commissions are thinking. The city of Toronto is going to be an essential service. That means they don't have the right to strike. What about the city of Ottawa? What about the city of London?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** What do you think?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** What I think is secondary, because what I know is that Premier McGuinty is removing their right to strike, a fundamental right. Let him explain—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** What do you think about it?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** In all due respect, our vote is rather tokenistic. They have the majority—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, they have the majority. It's very frustrating in opposition. We lose every vote. It is so disheartening. After 15 years here, my voice has been quelled or—

**Interjection:** Neutered.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** —neutered. Anyway, it is frustrating. No, it's true. It's almost like being—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** In all due respect, I'm trying to talk about the time allocation motion.

There will be an all-party committee. They will move amendments, we will move amendments on this, and I know the NDP will move amendments; I know they will. At least I can trust what they say. I know they are principled. They may be wrong, but they're principled.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** And you're going to vote with us.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, stranger things have happened.

Mr. Speaker, I'm being interrupted, which disturbs my line of thinking, which is strange as well.

"The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment"—there's overtime—"for clause-by-clause consideration on Wednesday, March 23, 2011. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a)...."

This thing is going to be rammed through and put to bed, never to be heard from again.

When Mike Harris was here, the front lawn was full, okay? Now Premier McGuinty does it and the galleries are empty. It's being hidden. It's being stealthily hidden below the radar screen of the Toronto Star, which is basically their cheerleader notes.

**Interjection:** I wouldn't say that.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, they have been telling more truthful commentary recently.

I guess this rolls me back to why I get so frustrated. Along with Christine Elliott, Jerry Ouellette and myself, there's been not a peep from Joe Dickson or Wayne Arthurs—pardon me, the member from—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. You got it; you got the message.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Very good. Yes, the member from—where is it? Maybe you can help me out here. Wayne Arthurs is Pickering-Scarborough East, the member from Pickering-Scarborough East. Actually, he was the mayor of Pickering; a great guy. I was on regional council in Durham with him; a good person. Why did he not stand up to how important the 407—I can tell you this: If they were to deny Hazel McCallion the 427 or something like that, a major artery of the economy, she'd be jumping up and down on Premier McGuinty's desk. Now what's happening? Durham is being denied the very artery of the economy, and not a word is being spoken by the two representatives I've referred to.

Transit is part of what I'm talking about—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I have great respect, and I've always found my friend Mr. O'Toole a very likeable gentleman, but it seems to me, with the rules of the House, he is straying a little bit from the debate on the TTC into the 407 and others. I know you'll provide good guidance on that matter.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Peterborough has a point of order. The member for Durham is making it very difficult for the Chair, because the standing orders are very clear. I don't want to have to do anything but listen to you speak to the matter that's on the floor. I'd like to do that.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm committing now; I'm reformed. I'm actually going to stick to the topic—generally, in a general sense. I try to link it to the mismanagement of the entire economy.

Quite honestly, this transit decision is the tip of the iceberg. Pay attention. They're trying to slip it through. A fundamental right is being denied, okay? Whether I agree or disagree, the bill is being put forward by Mr. Sousa,

the Minister of Labour—an excellent young guy, who's learning. I thought Mr. Fonseca was quite good, but he's running federally, I guess. My point being, it's the tip of the iceberg. Justice delayed is justice denied in all true fashion.

**0940**

Now, we have issues with this essential service mediation/arbitration process. I worked in labour relations for General Motors for a number of years, in personnel, and my degree is basically labour economics, so I can tell you what they should be replacing in the arbitration system—and this bill could do this. I would use a process that's been passed. It's called final offer selection. Both sides put their final offer on the table. They don't want to overdo it or underdo it, because the mediator, arbitrator or judge will say, "That's absurd."

But when you get into arbitrations recently—we had one in our area, and it took three years for the arbitrator to rule. Now they're in their next contract; they're at the table negotiating. The three-year retroactive pay was about \$20,000. Wait a minute here: Where is the reflection on the ability to pay? Do you understand? It's fine for Toronto. As I told you, they're assessment-based.

See, what I was saying was really quite instructive. I was talking about the wealth of assessment and the opportunities in the Toronto assessment base versus Brockville, for example. How are they going to match Toronto? It's not happening. It's a different type of economy. There's no one size fits all; those expectations are completely unrealistic.

The transit systems around Ontario are watching this very debate, and I feel for you, because transit is basically a municipal responsibility. It gets some transfer of funds in gas, which is a whole other story. That transfer payment is screwed up, because towns that don't have transit don't get the provincial gas tax. Towns that have transit get the gas tax provincially. Federally, towns get gas tax for roads and bridges when they don't have transit. That's the federal solution, and it's the right solution.

In our areas—and I look at the member from Brant and others—respectfully, transit for disabled persons etc. should be provided. I completely agree. But when there's no density, transit doesn't work. You can't have buses that cost \$400,000 rolling around town. These are important things. Every job that's full-time, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, takes five people. Did you know that? If you have one position that runs seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, it takes five people because of vacations and time off. Three shifts per day; that's three people. It's five people, each making \$50,000. That's \$250,000 to run a bus with nobody in it. It's absurd. Toronto I understand. There are three million people there; it's bigger than most provinces.

Let's be honest: What's at stake here is the definition of the essential service and what it means to other transit systems, which will eventually say, "We want the same law in Mississauga, in York."

York region, right now, is on strike, I believe; or working to rule in transit, and it does disrupt the econ-

omy. I have no question about it. When there's a monopoly position—that is, no competition—they have you by the throat. A monopoly, by its very structure, has an unbalanced negotiating position: “You either give me what I want or you will not have the service.”

These are the tough choices. In some areas, health care being one, automatically it's an essential service. You don't want doctors competing with each other, or nurses. But most professions are differentiated now, meaning for lawyers there are paralegals and for nurses there are nursing assistants and personal support workers. There are options of providing service or scope of practice rules.

This time allocation is typical of what's happening here. It's silencing debate. Maybe these are arcane discussions or people aren't interested, but it is important because transit is the biggest push item across Canada, and maybe around the world. We've got to get rid of the cars.

I have two daughters who live in London, England. If you drive into London, England, you better be rich, because it's about \$50 dollars a day plus parking. It's a fact. They take the train; there's no choice. I guess if you want to make something mandatory, make the alternative unaffordable.

This bill, small though it is, is very, very susceptible to causing costs to rise for municipalities, and indeed, at the end of the day, for users. It's already expensive to live in Toronto. The only thing I can say is Rob Ford was elected to make it less expensive, if he could. This bill is going to make it more expensive, in my view.

Suddenly I've run out of time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm going to do what the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services always used to do; that is, we oppose every time allocation motion presented before the House. Why? Because it strangulates debate; it ends it. I'm going to continue in that tradition, something that the honourable member used to do but no longer wishes to because he is in government. It's just the way it goes around the table.

I've got to tell you, I'm a bit surprised, and not a bit surprised, by my good friend from Durham. He spoke for 40 minutes, and I expected him to say how much he loves the Liberals on this particular bill. I expected that. Not once in 40 minutes did I hear him say, “Thank you. We agree with you.” That's why I continue to say, whenever I hear the member from Durham, you're so good in opposition. I love you there, I really do, and I want you to stay for a little longer, because you become a little more sensitive to the issues that Ontarians clearly are expressing to you. It makes you look good. It makes you look better, in my view.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm glad to be able to get up from time to time just to please her.

We find this particular bill repugnant. We find that the Liberals are becoming Conservatives in a hurry. They don't know how to please Conservatives. Why, first it

was income tax cuts and corporate tax cuts. I remember Mr. Martin killing the Reform Party by introducing corporate taxes and income tax cuts as a way to kill the Reform Party and as a way to show Conservatives that Liberals can do it just as well—and they do, and they can. There are a lot of believers in the Liberal Party.

I know that there are some amongst you who don't agree with Bill 150, but you dare not say it. You skulk away as fast as you can. You dare not enter into the debate. You hope you will not be asked by the media what your position is, and you hope, where you have unionized labour, that the issue will not come up. And when you meet those workers, you will say, “People say it's an essential service. We're not attacking you, because we know the work you do is so valuable, but we're just trying to respond to public opinion that says this is an essential service.” You hope that you will never have to answer those questions about why you introduced Bill 150. But if you do, you've got a standard answer, because you're all so ready for it: “His Excellency Mr. Ford has asked us to do it. City council has asked us to do it.”

What else could you do? If they come and ask you, “Do it,” do you say, “No, we can't”? Do you say, “No, we disagree with you”? No. In a hurry, the new Minister of Labour had the bill prepared. Before he even became a minister he had it all ready to go. Nothing against the labour minister—I like him; he's a friend of mine. He was ready to go as soon as he got into that position. God bless. Maybe the previous Minister of Labour—I like him too—had it all ready as well, and maybe before he was there the Premier's office had it all ready to go: “Here you go, Minister. It's ready for you. Do you agree? Disagree? It doesn't really matter. Here is the bill.”

**0950**

Some of you have made the argument that it's about health: If those unfortunate workers should go on strike, those poor people would have to drive their cars and, oh God, there would be so many more cars on the road and there would be so much more pollution. That's the argument some of you put forth. But remember, his lordship is the king of cars. He loves cars. During the election, he said, “We are going to end the war on cars.” Remember that? Why, his excellence loves cars, and he thinks we should have more cars on the road and nothing should impede his right and the right of car owners to be on that road and spill gas if he wants to. That's what I remember him saying. Why would you worry about his lordship and his love of cars and what those cars would do—except to spew pollution into the air? So that can't be an argument, can it? It can't be.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You guys, you're too loud. If you want to speak, could you just go out there for a second?

So it can't be the argument of cars.

What else could it be? Safety? I don't know.

Some of you put forth the problem of cost: “Good Lord, if they go on strike, the TTC management said it's

50 million bucks every day.” I really don’t know that it’s 50 million bucks, but that’s the argument you put forth.

By the way, they do not go on strike each and every year. The reason why they go on strike from time to time is because they feel that management isn’t listening and is bargaining hard to make sure that the union demands are never met. When that happens—and it’s a rare thing—they go on strike.

I believe workers are entitled to have that power to express their views and their feelings about what they believe they ought to have. What you’re doing is taking that right away. You are taking the right to strike away on the basis that when they strike, it causes a great deal of pollution because there are more cars and it’s so costly to the poor TTC.

I put to you that after this bill is passed and they go to arbitration, as indeed they will, it will cost the city more money, money they don’t have. Each and every year, as we have witnessed, when it goes to arbitration it will be more costly, and the city doesn’t have the money to deal with those extra costs. But you’re happy, even if that were to happen—and indeed it will—to say, “We’ve done it because the city of Toronto, His Excellency and a majority of the city councillors said, ‘Yes, we want you to pass this bill.’” And then you can say, “We are but the vessel for their wishes. We are only doing what they asked us to do.”

This is an attack on civil servants who work for the city and, in this particular case, work for the TTC. This is an assault on civil servants. I know most of you don’t want to admit this, but that’s what it is. In many of our communities across this province, people express hatred for civil servants. Why? Because most of them have a union and they’re well paid. They almost resent that. And I say to myself, why is it that they resent the fact that people work for government, whether it’s at a board of education, a municipality or the province—and yes, many of them have unions, and yes, many of them are well paid. Is that a bad thing, that they should belong to a union and that they should be well paid; that yes, they have benefits; and yes, that they have access to a pension at the end of their 30-year career, or less, or more?

It’s as if they resent those benefits and the pension that they have and the good salary they receive. Why do they resent it, many of them? Because they don’t have a pension, as many of the civil servants do. They don’t have access to benefits or these good salaries. So if they can’t have those things that civil servants have, then we should abolish their pension, we should take away their benefits and we should even take away their right to go on strike.

This is the beginning, and I believe some of you Liberals understand that this is the beginning of an assault against civil servants and that soon pensions will be under assault. It’s coming, and some of you know this. Intuitively you know it and you’re nervous about it but you feel, for political reasons, that this is a good thing to do in order to be as popular as the Conservatives, as His Excellency Mr. Ford, by proposing such a bill that they

have forced you to put forth. Some of you are worried but you don’t have the temerity to be able to stand up and say, “I disagree,” because there’s solidarity among caucus members.

It’s a worrying trend. We’ve seen it in the United States, we’ve seen it here in Canada, we see it in the industrialized world: Pensions are beginning to be eroded, benefits are beginning to be reduced, an assault on wages has happened for the last 10, 15 years, and we are witnessing a world of part-time work and many who are independent consultants with no pensions and no security. We are witnessing a world where we’re losing our manufacturing jobs, mostly unionized and well-paid. We are witnessing a world—in the industrialized world, at least—where the middle class is slowly disappearing and we’re going to have the majority squeeze down into the lower levels of the income scale.

We’re going to have an upper percentile of 5% or 7% of people earning over \$100,000 and the majority earning less than \$60,000, and it gets less and less as we go. That’s the world we’re facing. That’s the world that you are helping to create as you assault TTC workers, denying them the right to strike and prohibiting them from striking. It’s the beginning of an assault on many of the rights and benefits that they have gained, earned and fought for for many, many long decades.

The issue here, in part, is about funding. New Democrats in 1990 used to share the operating costs of the TTC 50-50. My friend, the city councillor from Scarborough—Rouge River, would remember that and he would remember that we used to pay 75% of capital costs for the TTC. We recognized then that the TTC is a shared responsibility between the province and the city, and that the Tories ended that arrangement in 1998-99, and the Liberals continue to this day.

Why is it a shared responsibility? Because the TTC cannot be paid for by property tax owners, by people who rent and small business that sustain the city of Toronto. It can’t be done; it can’t. People do not like paying property taxes on the single most important asset they own, which is their home. People have invested in their home, and that is about all most of them have. That’s the only capital they have. They don’t have extra money. When you increase their property taxes some of them go nuts, as some of you know. The member for Scarborough—Rouge River would know that. In my riding, every time I canvass, all they do is talk about how high their property taxes are, how high their hydro bills are going, their gas bills—

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** They want more services.

1000

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** They want more services, yeah.

So we say that the TTC isn’t something the city of Toronto alone is responsible for; it has always been a shared responsibility and we have ended that, just as we have ended the shared responsibility around public housing, which the Tories ended in 1998-99, and the Liberals continue in that tradition. Public housing is not some-

thing the city of Toronto is responsible for. Public housing is a shared responsibility, but particularly a provincial responsibility, not a responsibility of property owners alone and small business alone and renters alone.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** What?

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Point the finger at the other side.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I did. I pointed the finger clearly at them first, and then pointed my second finger directly at you as the party that has continued with that tradition.

These are costs that the majority of people simply cannot sustain. Property owners cannot bear the burden alone. It's wrong. Why? Because property taxes are an unfair way to raise money for services that properly belong to the provincial government. Thirty per cent of welfare costs in the city of Toronto are covered by property taxes. Between public housing, welfare costs and child care costs, we are talking about \$2.2 billion that city of Toronto property owners, renters and small business are paying, which they cannot afford.

When there are economic stresses on the city of Toronto, what do they do? You've got people like Mr. Ford—God bless him—saying “We've got to end the gravy train.” Would that we'd end the gravy train for businessmen, millionaires who are on that gravy train and have been on that gravy train for a long, long time. Would that we would start ending the gravy train with the millionaires we have in the city of Toronto and in Ontario. But he started that assault on politicians and on civil servants, and he wasn't the only one. Mon ami Mike Harris started that in 1995 with the assault on public servants. It continues with His Worship Mr. Ford, and it continues with the Liberals we have before us today.

Liberals are not strong supporters of labour—never have been. They pretend. They would love to be seen as defenders and supporters of labour. In my experience here in 20 years, they have never done much for labour—ever—not provincially, not federally. But they have a good image with labour. God knows, I just don't understand. In my view, the majority of Liberals are and have been anti-union for a long, long time, and this is but an excuse to do what His Excellency has asked them to do; that is, to end the ability of TTC workers to strike.

From time to time, Liberals introduce bills such as the one that gave part-time college teachers—remember that half of the college professors are part-time. OPSEU fought the Liberals for two and a half long years, saying it was about time that part-time college workers and other support staff had the right to collective bargaining, and indeed the right to strike. Finally, the Liberals introduced a bill two and a half years ago that would give college teachers the right to collective bargaining.

To this day, they have not been able to exercise that right, because the colleges have said, “Sorry, in spite of the fact that you have collected 10,000 signatures ready to be opened, ready for us to count those votes that would permit you to be a union, no. You need to be certain that

every single worker that has ever worked for the college system over the last many years—every single worker, whether they worked for an hour, two hours, five or 10, whoever they are, wherever they've been, whether they're still working for us or not. You've got to go and find them and you've got to ask them whether they want to be able to join the union.”

They virtually made it impossible for the college system, for OPSEU, the part-time workers and the support staff to ever find these people and get the 30%—the number required—to count those ballots and to get a count.

You understand: You introduce a bill that makes it appear like you support the college workers and the support staff, and in the end, there's no collective bargaining. But on paper, you appear as a government that supports the right of these workers to become a union. It's just a paper right; that's all it is.

I am appealing to some of the Liberal members to speak up. I appeal to the sense of justice that some of you have. I keep on making that appeal with so many different bills, and not one ever dares to vote against the government. But one continues to appeal to those who, I think, have a heart by way of issues of social justice, issues that you probably believe in. I suspect a lot of you think it's okay to have the right to strike. If some of you believe that, it would be nice to hear it from time to time.

I appeal to those watching this political program, because often I find some of the people who watch this political forum say that they like my speeches. Then I say, “Yes, but do you support the NDP?” And they say, “Well, we like your speeches, and we like what you say, but...” If some of you like our speeches and you like what we're saying, this type of bill tips the balance in a very negative direction, in a very destructive direction.

It leads us into that train wreck. It leads us into that arena where more and more people are part-time. It leads us into that arena where more and more workers haven't received a wage increase for 10 or 15 years. It leads us into the arena where 60% or 70% of the workers are in the service sector, the retail sector where the wages are \$10, \$11 or \$12 an hour.

It leads us into that arena where more and more seniors don't have the care that they deserve because we don't have the money because we're giving it away to corporations. We're cutting income tax, and we're giving away the money. We don't have any money left to take care of our seniors.

It leads into that world where we're losing our pensions. Understand, we don't have a pension either because Mike Harris took care of that. But it is a direction the world is moving in, where the corporations are saying, “We can't afford to have pensions.” What does it mean when the corporate world says we can't afford to have the defined benefit pensions we used to have? What does it mean?

It means that we will no longer be able to take care of ourselves in our retirement age. It means the majority of people—and right now 65% of people have to rely on the

CPP and old age security. If you qualify, you get approximately \$15,000 a year to survive as a pensioner. In my view, in this country, with \$15,000 you're dirt poor, and most of you know it. Sixty-five percent, 70% of people do not have a private pension.

Some of the wealthier ones who don't have access to a defined benefit package have their own pension by way of RRSPs, and God bless you, those who have money to do that. If you have a million bucks put away in an RRSP, assuming you're wealthy enough to max out with your \$22,000 a year, God bless you. If you've got that kind money at the end of 30 years, you will have a decent pension.

1010

But that means you're probably one of those lucky few wealthy enough to be able to put \$22,000 away in RRSPs. The majority of workers, who are working part-time, working in the retail sector, are only earning about \$20,000, \$25,000, \$30,000, \$35,000, \$40,000 a year. They can't put aside RRSP dollars to protect themselves from a very uncertain future; they can't do that.

That means the majority are living a precarious existence as they get closer to their senior years. It means that, should they have an unfortunate and terrible disease, such as Alzheimer's, that my father had, without the benefit of money to take care of themselves, and if they don't have children who can take care of them, where do they go if there's no space for them in the long-term-care facilities? Where do they go if they can't afford to put them in a long-term-care facility? Where do they go? And even if they could afford to put them in a long-term-care facility, many of us are so profoundly worried about getting in there, because we don't know the kind of care we're going to get because there are not enough nurses to take care of us.

God, have I heard horror stories. I've seen it through my own experience with my own father. I've seen it, heard it from so many who are so profoundly worried about sending their parents to a long-term-care facility.

If you don't have the money, what do you do when you become a senior? It's a precarious life. We are all heading to that tragic senior's life that doesn't look pretty to me. We are all heading there, except for the few who happen to be wealthy enough to be able to take care of themselves in the event that they have such horrible diseases like my father's, Alzheimer's.

The future looks bleak, my friends; the future looks very bleak. If we base it on the experience of the present, 10 years from now, it's going to be a whole lot worse, when we have more and more seniors reaching that state that, God, I am ever raging against. That's what we're heading to. That's what my fear is: My fear is that we are heading into a society of the haves and the have-nots, the wealthy and the not-so-wealthy—the perpetually permanent part-time workers and people who don't have pensions anymore. It's an ugly society that, I appeal to you, those of you watching, we have to rage against.

While Bill 150 appears to be harmless to you—because you think that you're doing the right thing by

attacking TTC workers—you are the not helping yourselves. You are collaborating in the diminishment of workers' rights. There couldn't be a worse time for union workers. There couldn't be a worse time for workers in general. There couldn't be, and it's going to get worse. There could not be a better time to have unionized labour defending the rights of men and women who work in those workplaces.

In a climate where we are killing our pensions, in a climate where we are suppressing wages, in a climate where we are told that we can no longer afford certain services we used to have, in a climate where our educational system is eroding, in a climate where we don't have enough money to do an IPRC—an identification, placement and review committee—to be able to assess the needs of those kids and make sure they get the attention they deserve, in a climate where parents are privately fundraising to the tune of \$600 million a year for services for their kids, which means that poor kids, poor families, who can't do that are not going to get those programs—in a climate like that, where our health care system is eroding and our seniors are not getting the support, in that environment, we need to support each other. We need to support unions that have fought for health and safety, unions that have fought for better wages, unions that have fought for vision care, unions that have fought for pensions and the right of men and women to live a decent life in that environment. We need them more than ever. This is an assault on those workers, and that is only the beginning.

So many good Liberals are being dragged into it. It's sad, pitifully sad, that so many good men and women in the Liberal Party are just being sucked into His Worship's demand that you do this as quickly as possible and with haste. That's why you've introduced this motion that I am attacking today. That's why we as New Democrats are attacking Bill 150: because it's an assault on workers. We'll continue to fight it as long as we can.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 8, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear their purple ribbons in recognition of Epilepsy Ontario and Epilepsy Cure Initiative.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** On behalf of my Leeds–Grenville page, Tyler Millson from North Grenville, I'd like to introduce his dad, Bart; Bart's sister Valerie Millson-

Jansen; her husband, Stephen; and their children, Colin and Ellen. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Please join me in welcoming, in the west members' gallery, page Brittany McCorriston's parents, from my riding: Brian and Susan McCorriston.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today John Phair, a councillor from the township of Enniskillen, attending the Ontario Good Roads Association and ROMA conference.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'd like to welcome some participants who are here today for Epilepsy Action Day: Margaret Maye, the president and founder of the Epilepsy Cure Initiative; Dr. McIntyre Burnham, or Mac Burnham, from the Epilepsy Ontario executive; Gary Neumann of the Epilepsy Cure Initiative; Thomas Drag of the Epilepsy Cure Initiative; and Peter Grzywacz. All of them are here today for Epilepsy Action Day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I would like to introduce Eric Duncan, one of Ontario's youngest mayors, at the age of 23, from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. He's a great friend to eastern Ontario.

**Mr. Bruce Crozier:** I'd like the members of the Legislature to join me in welcoming the mother of page Madeline, Nancy Diab from the great town of LaSalle.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I'd like to welcome the member for Ottawa South to the chamber today.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would just say to the member from Simcoe-Grey that that is not helpful. The Speaker can make arrangements that the member from Simcoe-Grey not be in the chamber today.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of page Holly Rose Lorenzon and the MPP for Vaughan, to welcome her mother, Josie Lorenzon, and her father, Renato Lorenzon, to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of page Simon Cook and the member for Oakville, I'd like to welcome Simon's family, his teacher Mr. Minkhorst and his grade 8 class to Queen's Park today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### HYDRO CHARGES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is for the Premier. The Ontario government is collecting a debt retirement charge on each and every hydro bill that an Ontario family pays. I believe that respect for Ontario families means being transparent and telling them exactly where that money is going.

In November, Premier, the McGuinty Liberals voted down a PC motion that would reveal how much longer families will be paying that debt and how much debt remains to be paid. Premier, why did you vote against making that basic information public to Ontario families?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm pleased to take the question.

I want to remind my honourable colleague about the origins of this particular debt retirement charge. The previous PC government's failed privatization attempt at Ontario Hydro in 1999 left a stranded debt of \$20 billion on the books, and they stuck families with the bill. That's the origin of the debt retirement charge. The PC government then added \$1 billion more to the stranded debt and the debt retirement charge on families' hydro bills. I think it's important to understand the very origins of that particular charge.

In the supplementaries, I know that my honourable colleague the Minister of Finance is going to want to further enlighten my colleague.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, I think you know that you're conveniently leaving out a number of facts in that response, to use parliamentary language, Speaker. You know that that stranded debt goes back all the way to the 1980s, including the Liberal Peterson government overruns on nuclear.

But, Premier, back to the question: The residual stranded debt was set at \$7.8 billion. It was asked that Ontario families would pay that through their hydro bills, \$7.8 billion, and to date they've paid \$7.8 billion. Despite that, your government is saying it may stay on the bills till as late as 2018. It's hard to take the Premier at his word when he doesn't get the facts.

Why won't you do the right thing, call in a forensic auditor, and tell us where all that money went to?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Auditor General has correctly pointed out that, from the time that party implemented the debt retirement charge to the time it left office, not only did they put it on people's bills, they didn't use it to pay down the debt—four long, painful years of ignoring the reality.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

Honourable members, we have a number of guests who are joining us today who would like to hear both—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Halton, when the Speaker is speaking, I would very much appreciate it if you would listen, because when you're speaking, you can't hear what I'm saying.

We do have a number of guests who are here. They do want to hear the questions, and they want to hear the answers. I would just ask that the honourable members be respectful of the guests who are visiting.

Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not only did they not use—  
*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Renfrew, I just sat down, and you started to interject. I've tried to be patient with all members of the House, and I would just ask that you be cognizant of the importance of listening as well. Thank you.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not only did they not use the funds to pay down the debt, they added an additional \$1 billion to the stranded debt. Every year since we've taken office, we've put \$1 billion down against that stranded debt. And yes, we can report—and the Auditor General looks every year at the books, not only of the province but of the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. The debt retirement charge will come off people's bills sometime between 2015 and 2018. It depends on a number of factors, including the interest rate.

What I can tell the members opposite and tell the people of Ontario is that again this year, this government will pay more than \$1 billion dollars off that debt, instead of adding money to the debt, like that leader and his party did for the first four years they levied that charge.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** With all due respect, Premier and finance minister, we want a straight answer. Why don't you just open the books and let Ontario families see exactly where that money has gone? See, I don't think you understand: Every Ontario family is paying \$84 a year towards the debt retirement charge. That's what it means for an average Ontario family. And then you threw the HST on top of that to take even more money out of their pockets. But you won't tell them where the money is going, and now you're saying it could be as late as 2018.

Basically, Premier, you're turning a temporary debt retirement charge into a permanent tax grab on the backs of Ontario families. Do the right thing, call in a forensic auditor, and let's see what you did with all that money.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Auditor General of Ontario has signed off on the books every year—every year. And what do we know? That party that put the debt retirement charge on people's bills, not only did they not use it the first four years, they added to the debt.

I look forward to debating this issue with the people of Ontario. The member for Simcoe–Grey wants to try to pretend that he didn't bungle the energy file, which he did. It's because of you there's a debt retirement charge. It's because of their inability to apply the money where it should have been that it grew under their watch. We're paying it down each and every year. The auditor signs off on it. The books are open and clear. They were a failure in energy policy. We're cleaning up the mess.

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## HYDRO CHARGES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'll try the Premier again. Annual reports of the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. do not report the balance of the residual stranded debt. The minister says the Auditor General signed off on those books. The books are absent. They say nothing about how much debt is there or when it will be paid off. We asked exactly when this will be paid off. They say—now, the minister finally admits maybe as late as 2018.

Premier, this is what it means for average folks. It's like getting a credit card bill every month and asking to pay off the interest with no idea how much principle remains. That is just plain wrong, and it is absolutely showing no respect for the families who are getting stuck with the bills.

Why won't you do the right thing? Let's get the facts on the table. Call in a forensic audit and tell families straight to their face where the money went and how much more is to go.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll refer the member opposite to the public accounts of Ontario and remind him again that their party did in fact put the debt retirement charge on people's bills.

Just to remind people: They broke up the old Ontario Hydro. They wanted to sell off Hydro One and OPG. What they did was took all the debt off of their balance sheets; that is, they took the debt and said to the people of Ontario, "You're going to pay off this debt while we sell these assets to our friends." You know what? The people of Ontario put an end to that.

What did they do when they put on the debt retirement charge? They didn't apply a single penny of the money raised to the debt for the first four years. We have put more than a billion dollars down each and every year, audited. The balances are there—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Simcoe–Grey, your leader is trying to ask a question, and you are interrupting your own leader.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I will express my disappointment directly to the Premier of the province that he's not answering these very straightforward and basic questions today. Instead, he's asking his finance minister to try to create a fog around the issue, to talk about anything but the essential question.

Families pay this on each and every bill and you come up with all kinds of cover stories. Your member for Northumberland–Quinte West says now the stranded debt is \$12 billion. The member from Brant threw out a figure saying it was \$19 billion. Premier, for goodness sake, you can't even get your cover stories straight.

Let's get the facts. Let's get it on the table. Will you show respect to families who pay the bills? Call in a forensic audit. Let's see where that money went.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The numbers that the Leader of the Opposition puts out on this issue—and the member for Simcoe–Grey—are simply wrong. They're designed to confuse people. They're designed to hide the fact that not only did they levy the debt retirement charge, they didn't use one penny of it for the first four years to pay down the debt. In that sense, had they used that money appropriately, maybe it would be paid off sooner.

This government, in each budget that's audited by the Auditor General, has paid down more than a billion dollars. The number is coming down each and every year.

It's audited by the Auditor General. Their voodoo numbers are just wrong. The people of Ontario remember what they did to hydro. They remember that they wasted that money and didn't—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'll try back to the Premier once again. Maybe I'll get two out of six questions answered and bat .333 today.

Premier, you famously said last week about Ontario families that, "We're just kind of growing up a little bit as Ontarians." I wonder if Premier Dad thinks we're old enough to find out exactly how much stranded debt is remaining and where the money went. Will you treat the families who pay the bills as adults?

With all due respect, you're trying to obscure this issue. Where did the money go? How much is left? Will you do the right thing and quit changing your cover stories? I don't know what you're trying to hide. Put the facts on the table. Call in a forensic audit today.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have great respect for the Auditor General of Ontario, who looks at these numbers every year. I have great respect for an Auditor General who has reported in each and every year that the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There are a number of members—if they want to be set free from this place, the Speaker can certainly arrange that.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They have great confidence in the Auditor General. They don't have confidence in the Leader of the Opposition because they know that that leader and his party put—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That took, I think, maybe 15 seconds.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They don't have confidence in the Leader of the Opposition because they know it was his party that put this charge on their bills. Then, for the first few years, they didn't even pay down the debt with the money. They put a hidden cap on price.

We're doing the right thing. We're paying down more than a billion a year. It will be paid down, off of people's bills, sometime between 2015 and 2018. That's the honest answer—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## GASOLINE PRICES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. I asked the Minister of Energy on Monday what happened to the all-party committee that was tasked to look at gasoline prices over five years ago. He didn't have an answer for me then. My question to the Premier is, does he have an answer today?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I welcome the question. My friends opposite will know that I have been on the road,

speaking to many Ontarians, and gasoline prices are a pressing issue for families and businesses alike. I was in northern Ontario yesterday, and that's a real and ongoing concern there.

I think more and more Ontarians are coming to understand that, as a result of developments in the Middle East at this point in time, there is some real insecurity associated with the future supply of oil and gas, and that's driving up the costs.

I noticed with interest this morning on CNN—I want to quote from what they said: "The national average price for a gallon of regular gasoline rose 1.2 cents Wednesday ... according to a daily survey from motorist group AAA. Prices have jumped 23.6 cents over the past eight days." This is a global phenomenon.

We are doing what we can here in Ontario—I'll speak about that in the supplementary—to help out our families.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Last night, gas prices shot up another three cents a litre in Toronto. In Sioux Lookout, some drivers are paying \$1.31 a litre today.

Why is the Premier willing to regulate the price of beer but unwilling to do anything at all about the price of gasoline?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I gather that my honourable colleague, as the leader of the NDP, is proposing that we regulate gas prices in Ontario. That is something that they actually looked at in government. It's something that they looked at in government; it's something that we've looked at in government. We've all rejected it, and I'll tell you why: Because the practical experience on the ground has been that where you regulate, prices overall tend to be higher. It tends to cost more for gasoline for families and businesses alike in those jurisdictions where you regulate your gas prices. That's why we are looking at other ways to help our families.

Ninety-three percent of Ontarians have received a permanent income tax cut. Typical Ontario families are getting a tax cut of \$355 this year and every year going forward. Those are real, meaningful, practical ways that we can help out families with their household expenses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier isn't just ignoring the problem; he's making it worse by slapping the HST on gasoline prices and daily essentials like home heating. The Premier ignored families and their real concerns about making ends meet. Did the McGuinty Liberals really even consider, when they hit families with their unfair HST tax, that gas prices might start climbing?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to draw my honourable colleague's attention once again to the clean energy benefit. There was advice that we received from the NDP, saying that we should reduce the cost of our electricity bills by 8%. We considered that and we said that was inadequate. We took it two points higher. We're cutting our electricity bills by 10%, and my colleague has yet to acknowledge that.

The fact is, we are very sensitive to household expenses and the pressures they put on moms and dads. That's why we put forward things like our clean energy benefit, taking 10% off the bills for the next five years; our income tax cut of \$355 for the average Ontario household; and the children's activity tax credit—\$50 per child. As I say, those are real and practical ways that we're helping families manage their household expenses.

1050

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Premier. Yesterday, the minister claimed that the HST would protect health care and improve education. Government documents, in fact, confirm that the HST will take \$6.8 billion out of family budgets. How much of that money will Ontario's corporate sector be receiving in tax giveaways?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Our overall tax cuts will save 93% of Ontarians money overall.

The leader of the third party is trying to use documents that we were happy to release to the public by selecting numbers that are incomplete and, in fact, paint an inaccurate and incomplete picture.

The tax cuts we've provided and the various tax credits we have provided help ensure that, particularly, people of more modest means will actually come out ahead overall. What this tax plan for jobs and growth does is, it will help create some 600,000 jobs in Ontario over the next 10 years. This is an important policy that we strongly believe will not only lower taxes for most Ontarians but will create jobs and growth in the future for our children and their children.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Government memos obtained through freedom of information show very clearly where the money is going: The government will collect \$6.8 billion worth of new sales taxes from cash-strapped families and hand out \$6.8 billion in corporate tax giveaways.

Does the Premier know about some kind of magical math that the rest of us don't?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The leader of the third party conveniently ignores a number of things. I would refer her to the 2009 budget, the 2010 budget and the 2011 budget, which will be coming out shortly.

First of all, off of that money will come the most generous sales tax credit in the country for all Ontarians of modest means. I would remind her of the energy tax credits for the north, particularly for individuals and large corporate interests, to ensure that they remain competitive. She also forgot to mention the personal tax cuts; Ontario now has the lowest tax rate on the first \$37,000 of income. That's why people like Hugh Mackenzie and other anti-poverty activists have embraced our agenda—our agenda for jobs and growth—and reject this sleight of hand and incomplete and inaccurate assessment—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I withdraw the comment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Households are getting hit hard with spiking gas prices, sky-high electricity costs, and heaven help them if they have a loved one who needs long-term care in this province. But the Bank of Montreal saw their profits rise by 57%, to \$2.8 billion a year. Their CEO, Bill Downe, got a \$2-million raise. Oil giant Shell raked in \$90 billion.

Why do families that pay for gasoline have to pay more while the people making record profits still get a tax break?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's this simple: Alberta, British Columbia and other Canadian provinces have lower corporate taxes than Ontario. If we do not address this question, the leader of the third party's policy will be a great job creator for Alberta, for Saskatchewan, for British Columbia, for Michigan, for Indiana, for Illinois—the list goes on.

These are difficult choices, and I respect the fact that Jack Layton and the federal NDP are now taking corporate taxes off the agenda in Ottawa, because it is the right thing to do.

She's tripping over her own rhetoric. Her own staff said a couple of months ago that these tax cuts won't help businesses in Ontario because they're not making money.

This will help the auto sector and the forestry sector. It's about jobs and a better future for our children.

## ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. On Monday, Minister, you said the towers being held hostage at Caledonia were not part of the plan to transmit hydro from Big Becky, but the website of your own government agency says it is. Yesterday you got caught and were forced to admit that it was part of the plan all along. Then you dodged questions over whether these towers were critical to the Big Becky project.

Either you don't understand your file, or you attempted to mislead this House. Which one is it?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment he just made.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdrawn.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** In answer to that question, the member has no idea what he's talking about. Hydro One stopped work on the Niagara transmission reinforcement project in 2006 in order to remove any possible obstacle to a resolution of that process. The line being constructed is to strengthen our interconnection with the state of New York at Niagara Falls, not to transmit power from the Niagara Tunnel. At present, this situation does not impact reliability in that area or anywhere else in southern Ontario.

We'll continue to work with Six Nations and the surrounding communities at building stronger partnerships that can lead to peace and reconciliation in that community. The PC approach clearly is to try to stir things up in that community. It's irresponsible. It indicates they've learned nothing from the shame that their party brought to the people of this province as a result of Ipperwash.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Minister, you have completely bungled your own file. From the microFIT fiasco to your smart meter tax machines to your offshore wind farm backtrack, Ontario families are paying for your incompetence. The billion-dollar Big Becky project is projected to cost another \$600 million, and you've spent \$116 million to build transmission lines for it. Now you're saying you don't even know if the power Big Becky produces will go anywhere because the towers are being held hostage in Caledonia.

The Premier, in a scrum today, unbelievably said this is the first he's ever heard of that problem. Can you believe it? Is this another one of your billion-dollar boondoggles that will stick Ontario families with the bill?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I find the PCs' continual efforts to stir things up in Caledonia put on display, frankly, their true lack of moral fibre. This party left our transmission and distribution systems in a state of decay—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The member from Renfrew is about to jump up on a point of order. I can honestly tell you that because of the interjections that were taking place I did not hear a—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I don't need help from the member from Nepean.

I didn't hear a comment because I could not hear because of the noise. Minister, if you said something that was of a nature that caused some disruption in the House, I would just ask that you withdraw it, please.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I didn't think it was offensive, but if it offended anybody I withdraw it. I'm happy to withdraw it.

That party left our transmission distribution system in a state of decay. They opposed our efforts to invest \$7 billion since 2003 and to upgrade 5,000 kilometres of transmission line. They oppose our efforts to build a line from Bruce to Milton. They oppose our plans to invest in the Pickle Lake line, the east-west tie, and strengthen the southwestern Ontario grid.

It's rather interesting, though, that there's only one transmission line in the entire province that party wants us to move on quicker, and it just happens to be a line that runs through a sensitive area in dispute with Six Nations—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### DISCLOSURE OF TOXINS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, you will know—because the

Toronto Star, myself and others have raised the issue—about the fiasco over the use of Agent Orange over the past couple of weeks. Your response up to date has been a fairly simple one: that you will put in place, as you call it, a “herbicide spraying project team” in order to investigate what happened.

My question to you is simply this: Why would you put the MNR in charge of collecting the information related to the use of Agent Orange when it was this very ministry that not only used Agent Orange but, quite frankly, kept their mouth shut when they found out it was harmful to the public?

1100

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'm very pleased to answer another question on this issue in the House. Again, I want to reiterate our great concern over this issue. Since learning about it, as I stated earlier, I've been committed to obtaining all the facts and sharing the information. Certainly, when the individual from Tembec first approached us, he gave us some very thoughtful recommendations, and I appreciate his coming forward.

We have two priorities in our government. First of all, it's to find and identify those who were exposed back in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and possibly the 1980s, and also to work with health experts to understand fully the impact this herb spray may have on human health.

I think we were the initial ministry that was contacted and I certainly am working with my ministry officials and everyone else within the other ministries to collect that information. I think it is important for us to share and be accountable and transparent about the information we receive with the public of Ontario. Their health is on the line. We understand that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, I don't doubt for a second that you're concerned; so am I; so is every Ontarian. That is not the issue. The issue is: Why would we put the very ministry in charge of the investigation when they are the ones, quite frankly, that withheld the information from the public in the late 1970s and early 1980s?

So I ask you again: Why was this the government's response? Why did you put the very ministry that was the culprit in charge of the investigation?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** We have created an independent fact-finding panel and they'll be able to help us collect that information. I've written to the federal Minister of Health and asked for their involvement in this. As well, my deputy, I think yesterday, sent out a letter to all the territories and provinces asking for information and to share it.

I think there's only one thing you can do at this point: collect information, share it publicly, and not be worried about who did what, but collect that information. This is an issue that has spanned decades. We need to make sure that we work with Health Canada and other provinces to share that information. And certainly the federal government has a responsibility. They regulated the use of herbicides across this country, and this particular herbicide was registered by the pesticides directorate of Agriculture

Canada. The federal department was responsible for registering those pesticides. We're going to work—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. On Friday, February 11, the members opposite from Nepean—Carleton and Whitby—Oshawa appeared at the Winchester District Memorial Hospital in my riding of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry for a rally to save the hospital's emergency department. Their claim was that it was this government's intention to reduce hours and services in the emergency department at that hospital.

I know of the good work that we've done in the past seven years for Winchester and for the high-quality health care that we have here in Ontario, and I know that we want to have health care in hospitals close to home, so this concerned me very much. It concerned my constituents. It concerned my mother; she's in that hospital right now.

I would appreciate it if the minister could inform my constituents of the status of Winchester's emergency department and this government's plans for it.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member for the question. Let me be clear: The Champlain LHIN has absolutely no plans to reduce hours at or close the emergency room at Winchester District Memorial Hospital.

This is exactly the kind—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Members will please come to order.

Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This is exactly the kind of bizarre, drive-by smear campaign that the opposition has chosen as their tactic. Ontarians have become accustomed to this, and it is bizarre. They are fearmongering and they are seeking to undermine people's confidence in our health care system.

On this side of the House we are investing in the Winchester hospital. We've invested \$45 million to improve the hospital, including improvements to the emergency department.

Let's not forget, the PCs—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** Thank you, Minister, for those reassuring words. I want to say that I know what has happened there at the hospital. I know of the consultation process that has gone on at that hospital. I attended the consultation process—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Nepean can take—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The Minister of Consumer Services.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Nepean can take this as a final warning: One more outburst and I'll have no choice but to name her.

Please continue.

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** It concerns me that this announcement was made by the members opposite without any regard or concern for the—people worried for days about this situation. If they really wanted a photo op, they could have travelled down to Cornwall and stood outside Cornwall's general hospital that they closed. They closed that hospital.

I have advocated for Winchester hospital, and I would like the minister to inform this House of the investments that have been made by the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me share a quote from the Cornwall Standard Freeholder from February 17 on this issue:

"Overlooked was the fact that Jim Brownell, who represents Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, has been working diligently behind the scenes to make sure the hospital's ER's status quo is maintained.

"The Winchester hospital, as with Cornwall and Alexandria hospitals, has no bigger supporter than Brownell who has played a major role in securing funds for health care in his riding."

The opposition has a plan to silence the local voice when it comes to health care. They want to make all decisions behind closed doors here at Queen's Park. The people of Ontario want a local voice.

I want to congratulate the member. He has done an outstanding job for his constituents.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. New question.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. Ontario families purchased rotor components, generators, concrete, steel towers and blades in good faith. It's a shame that they were lured into the Premier's energy experiment in the first place. It is an outright lack of respect for Kingston families who made these consumer purchases and then were left unprotected from the Premier's sudden backtrack on offshore wind turbines.

Do you agree with Mayor Mark Gerretsen that the Premier's backtrack on his energy experiment in your riding was "purely political"?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I think the Minister of Energy is in a much better position to answer this question.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We listened very carefully to that member's leader yesterday when he unequivocally said that the Green Energy Act is going to be pretty much cancelled and that these contracts won't continue. What that does is it verifies what the member for Simcoe-Grey said earlier this month: "We're not going to sign any more of these" feed-in tariff "contracts. Those days will be gone." Then he made a threat: "Whoever gets a contract now, enjoy it while you have it."

That's unmitigated arrogance. It shows a total disrespect for the farmers who are working hard and trying to contribute to building our clean energy economy.

They want to cancel this program altogether; we're making it work. We're working with thousands of Ontario farmers to give them an opportunity to participate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I can appreciate that now the Minister of Consumer Services is in a conflict of interest. After all, he was the Minister of the Environment in January 2008 when the McGuinty government cleared the way for offshore wind turbines. Then, the Premier's seat-saver program kicked into gear and executed what Mayor Mark Gerretsen calls a "purely political" back-track.

Now the Kingston Economic Development Corp. is going around saying that the backtrack is merely a suspension and to expect wind projects to come back online. Who told them the industrial wind turbine experiment will go ahead after the election: the Premier, the energy minister or you?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Once again, that party gets up and has a variety of opinions about the efforts that we're making to clean up the energy mess that they left behind. But what their leader did not say yesterday was that—he did not tell the thousands of clean energy workers across this province why he wants to kill their jobs. What he's planning to do, in wiping out the efforts we've made to build a clean energy economy, is kill thousands of jobs and scare off billions of dollars of investments. These are real workers holding good jobs, with real families, who want to keep working. I've met those workers face to face in places like Cambridge, Burlington, Fort Erie, Tillsonburg, Newmarket; the list goes on and on, and it continues to grow every day. Those workers deserve to know where that member stands and where her party stands. Are they going to kill those thousands of jobs that were—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1110

## NUCLEAR ENERGY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier. Since 1999, each Ontario household has paid thousands of dollars servicing Ontario Hydro's stranded debt, most of which is the result of massive cost overruns at nuclear plants built in Ontario. Now your government is embarking on a new round of costly nuclear projects. What is the

Premier doing to protect Ontarians from having to pay off tens of billions of dollars in additional debt from its new nuclear project?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We are looking to invest in refurbishing our nuclear units. Indeed, we're eagerly awaiting the federal government to get through their AECL process so that we can purchase two additional new units, because nuclear makes up half of our baseload capacity. It's an absolutely critical part of ensuring that we have a reliable source of power.

I would encourage the member to take a look at his own NDP energy policy. Maybe they might want to think about the importance of nuclear in ensuring that we do have a reliable-source-of-energy policy. We've said it before: The NDP has not come forward with any kind of an energy plan. We do know one thing: Nuclear is not going to be in it; other sources of energy are not likely going to be in it. The NDP nuclear plan stands for "no darned power" plan.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I am surprised that the Premier didn't answer this. The minister said that, clearly, it's a blank cheque for the nuclear industry. Whatever they want, he's going to give; it's very clear.

My question: A new report from the Ontario Clean Air Alliance indicates that OPG—Ontario Power Generation—is asking the Ontario government to guarantee repayment of money it borrows to rebuild the Darlington nuclear plant. Based on past nuclear cost overruns, the alliance says that Ontarians should expect cost overruns of \$21 billion or more. Will the Premier protect Ontarians from future debt charges and taxes by telling OPG that the Ontario government will not pay a single penny of the debt or cost overruns from the Darlington refurbishment?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member's leader gets up day after day and talks about the importance of jobs across this province. There are 70,000 jobs in the nuclear industry. The vast majority of those jobs are in Ontario. It's very clear that the NDP does not care about those 70,000 workers. Well, we do. That's why we may be the one government left in this country that—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I've been tolerant with the member from Renfrew; final warning for the member from Renfrew.

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We may well be the one government left in this country that is standing up for those 70,000 workers. We will not allow that nuclear industry to be the next Avro Arrow of the federal government. We're going to stand up for those workers. We're going to stand up for this very important industry. It's the backbone of our energy system. It's a very important part of our economy. You may not recognize it. You may not care about those 70,000 workers and their families—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## GREENBELT

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Today marks the sixth anniversary of Ontario's greenbelt, a working countryside that arches its way around the greater Golden Horseshoe and includes the southern part of my riding in Peterborough.

Nine out of 10 Ontarians support the greenbelt, which is internationally recognized as a model for the world. These supporters recognize the greenbelt's benefits as a source of local healthy food, recreation and tourism opportunities, not to mention the protection it affords to our watersheds, stream and rivers. They also recognize its importance to future generations.

Through you to the minister, could the minister please clarify for the House the importance of the greenbelt and what it means to Ontario's future?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Today, we do celebrate. We celebrate the greenbelt: 1.8 million acres of protected countryside, roughly the size of Prince Edward Island. Our government is safeguarding it for future generations, and you're right: nine out of 10 Ontarians support this initiative.

The official opposition has signalled that it's open to the idea of getting rid of it, and if past behaviour is a predictor of future behaviour, then I must point out that the PC environment critic voted against it, the PC natural resources critic voted against it, the PC tourism critic voted against it, the PC agriculture critic voted against it, and the leader of the official opposition voted against it. Shame.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It's unbelievable that the official opposition, a party where several members have a rural background, would vote against this important measure.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Oxford. Member from Durham.

Please continue.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** This government is protecting land so that farmers and our future generations can continue to benefit. The greenbelt is a busy place for farming, vine lands and recreation.

My supplementary is again to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. My constituents understand the importance of preserving green space, but I'd like to know what exactly the greenbelt provides them with. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could the minister please outline to this House what exactly protecting such a valuable green space accomplishes?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The vast majority of the greenbelt is farmland. In fact, almost half of our fruit farms and one fifth of our vegetable farms are located in the greenbelt. The greenbelt also protects the headwaters of all major watersheds in the western GTA. It provides numerous recreation and tourism opportunities and is the location of numerous historical landmarks, fairs, festivals, culinary tours and wineries.

What's shocking is that the leader of the official opposition wants to get rid of this. His party voted against it. The Leader of the Opposition would rather see a Niagara mid-peninsula highway than a protected green space. The PC leader wants to pave over the riding of Burlington even though his caucus colleagues the members from Burlington and Halton are against it. We will protect the greenbelt.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. This week, Verso Economics released a study saying that for every renewable energy job created in the UK, 3.7 other jobs are lost. In Ontario, that means that if you reach your target of renewable energy jobs, Ontario will actually lose another 185,000 jobs. This confirms once again what we in the Ontario PC caucus have been saying all along. How much more evidence do you need that your expensive energy experiments are hurting Ontario families?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Once again, the PCs start quoting reports that have been very much discredited in the past and will continue to be. The fact is, when it comes to jobs, his leader made it very clear yesterday that he's not going to stand up for the thousands of Ontarians who are working in our clean energy economy; that what he is planning to do—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Goodbye.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That's not helpful. I'm going to warn the Minister of Children and Youth Services for that. That's not helpful.

As well, I had warned the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, and I do have to name John Yakabuski, the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

*Mr. Yakabuski was escorted from the chamber.*

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Health, a warning to you as well too. It's not helpful—or maybe it was the Minister of Economic Development. I'm warning you both.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Minister, the only discredit goes to you. This is just the latest in a long list of studies that prove what we have been saying. A Spanish study says that every renewable job costs 2.2 jobs; an Italian study says that every renewable jobs costs 6.9 jobs; and this latest Verso Economics study says that every renewable jobs costs 3.7 jobs. Why should anyone believe your phony job creation numbers when everybody else says it doesn't work?

1120

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** As I said, they like to quote studies funded by big oil. That's up to them. That study was totally discredited.

What they don't want to talk about, though, is their own leader's plan for energy because they know that his plan would kill thousands of clean energy jobs—13,000

jobs created last year in this province in our clean energy economy; it will be up to 36,000 by the end of this year.

I've met those workers face to face. I challenge the member opposite to come out with me across this province in places like Windsor; like Tillsonburg; his leader's backyard of Fort Erie; in Cambridge; in Sault Ste. Marie. I challenge him to come with me and meet those workers face to face, go eyeball-to-eyeball with them and tell them you want to kill their jobs.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Why does everybody have to yell so much?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** To answer the member's question from Durham about why everyone has to yell so much: There's so much noise in this chamber, no one can hear each other.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Families in Niagara region are frustrated with their health care system, and for good reason. They've seen emergency rooms close in Fort Erie and Port Colborne and other services disappear from their communities. Last month, Niagara regional council approved a resolution calling for the independent investigation of the Niagara Health System. Is the Premier ready to listen to the residents of Niagara and call for an independent investigation?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I share the goal of everyone in Niagara when I say that our job is to improve health care in Niagara for the people of Niagara. The NHS is doing excellent work. There is new leadership there: the very capable interim leadership of Sue Matthews. They are moving forward to implement the hospital improvement plan.

I have no plans to appoint an investigator at this time. There have been several investigations, surveys and community engagements done in that area. In fact, Dr. Jack Kitts, who is the CEO of the Ottawa Hospital, had an engagement there; over 5,000 people showed up to discuss the Niagara health improvement plan.

We are moving forward to improve health care for people in Niagara. I look forward to the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I would guess that 5,000 people showed up because 5,000 people are just a small example of how many people are angry about what's happening in the Niagara Health System.

Niagara Falls, Welland and Fort Erie have all passed similar resolutions. People are looking for an accountable, transparent health care system that actually responds to their needs. An independent investigation into the NHS would just be a start.

As families lose health care services and feel increasingly distrustful of the decision-making process, why won't the Premier and this minister take the advice

of regional leaders and order the investigation that they have called for?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Just last week, the Niagara Health System shared with the community exactly how the changes they are making are improving health care for people. Wait times are down.

Let me share with you how far wait times have come down in Niagara since 2003: Hip replacements are less than half of what they were; we've been able to cut 200 days off hip replacements; knee replacements are down by 36%—127 days of less waiting; cataract surgery is down; MRI outpatient is down by 33%; and outpatient CT scans are cut in half.

We are getting excellent results. I know that the people of Niagara are looking forward to the opening of the St. Catharines General Hospital. For the first time, they'll be able to get cancer care much closer to home.

## AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Time and time again, I hear the Leader of the Opposition criticizing the Ontario government, stating that handouts to business under the guise of job creation are more about rewarding political friends than boosting the economy.

The member opposite has gone as far as stating, "This corporate welfare is sometimes two steps away from corruption." This is a very big accusation. I represent many constituents that, in one way or another—both directly and indirectly—are employed by the auto industry. What concerns me most is that the member opposite opposed a partnership with the auto sector, calling the government's assistance "corporate welfare."

For this reason, I want to ask the Minister of Economic Development and Trade whether or not my constituents should care about the McGuinty government's investments in the auto sector.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** We're often very disappointed in the statements by members of the opposition about a sector that's so critical to the Ontario economy. When we stepped forward to partner with the auto industry during a recession that was the worst in terms of its impact on the manufacturing sector, we did not have the support of opposition members.

We went forward without them, but we partnered with great organizations: the CAW, GM, Chrysler. Today, Ontario can say that that partnership was worth it and those jobs—not just the jobs in Scarborough with this able representation, but the jobs right across Ontario—are being picked up, retained and, in fact, growing. We are delighted to report massive investments by General Motors in St. Catharines and in Oshawa—more people, more shifts. We're delighted that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Peterborough and the member from Durham, your comments to one another are very much of a personal nature.

I don't need to be in the crossfire, and I would much prefer that you take your differences outside this chamber.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Minister, thank you for that response. I believe that if it hadn't been for the Ontario government's investment in the auto industry, many of my constituents would be unemployed. It's great to hear the auto sector giants have been able to rebound and continue to grow. Additional production shifts and launching new vehicles is great news for this province and my constituents.

But what about small businesses involved in the industry? They're often the backbone of economic success. Have these businesses been able to rebound just as effectively as their big brothers, or were they overlooked when the government was providing assistance to the auto sector?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I appreciate that the opposition members don't like getting called out on their behaviour, but we're intent on doing that, not just now but especially when we go back to the people of Ontario and ask, "Who was there for you when you needed help the most?" It was this Ontario McGuinty government, and it was done in the absence of support of the opposition members.

They're prepared to show up at receptions like the one last night, held right here in the precinct, to show their big support for industry, but where were they when those very same companies were looking for assistance to keep these jobs alive? Only the McGuinty government was there, not just for the companies, but for the CAW as well.

We will be there again, not just for those assemblers but also for those auto parts suppliers that are a critical part of that supply chain. There is no one on this continent that does it as well as Ontario, and that's because of the support of the McGuinty government in the absence of the members of the opposition.

### SCHOOL SAFETY

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, last week the Ontario Student Trustees' Association released a survey which found that 46% of students in the senior grades had been bullied. As you know, this is a most significant increase from the 29% found in a similar survey by CAMH in 2009. We've gone from 29% to 46%.

However, this survey does confirm what students, parents and teachers repeatedly say; that is, that the situation is getting worse and that this government has no coordinated plan to keep our students safe in our schools.

I ask you, when will your government take the steps to keep our students safe in school?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Certainly, student safety in our schools is a very important issue. That is why our government has made a priority of this. That is why we have established safe school teams. We have even asked these teams to work and ensure that we observe Bullying

Awareness Week, which takes place in the fall. We are also asking boards to report to us to keep track of those incidences. We are doing everything we can to ensure that students have safe places to go.

1130

Secondary schools, are very important places. I'm happy as well to report to this House that because of our investments in secondary schools, almost 80% of the students who are in those schools now are graduating. When we came to government, one in three of those students was dropping out—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Minister, I noticed that you're avoiding the fact. The fact is that 46% of the students were identified as having been bullied. This is a serious number; it's a high number.

Unfortunately, to compound the seriousness of this issue, in 2010 the Auditor General criticized your ministry for recklessly throwing money at the bullying problem without bothering to develop performance indicators or tracking measures. This is despite the fact that your Premier says that tracking and measuring are critical for accountability. You've doled out \$150 million without requiring schools to tell you whether it's been spent on safe school initiatives or if it's been effectively spent. You wrote the cheque and you walked away.

Why has your government failed to develop a comprehensive plan to keep our students safe at school?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Actually, we do have a plan. It is the Safe Schools Act—and the honourable member and the members of the opposition voted against that piece of legislation. It is with that legislation that in 2011-12 we will be requiring school boards to actually report.

We are the government that requires reporting. We want to know these numbers. The previous government did not do that. We want those numbers because we want to continue to stream resources to schools to support them in their efforts to keep schools safe.

This is the government that has acted with legislation; they voted against that legislation. So it strikes me as very strange that they have the nerve to stand in the House today and ask what we're doing, when they voted against what we are doing to keep students safe.

### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. The decision to buy dirty diesel trains now and electrify later will cost taxpayers an extra \$400 million for an extra track. Metrolinx has not yet signed the contract, we've learned. Will this government do the right thing and cancel the plan to purchase dirty diesel trains?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We really have to ask whether the third party is interested in transit or is not interested in transit. We have to ask whether the third

party is interested in having a world-class air-rail link from Union to Pearson or whether they are not.

We have said that we're going to have the air-rail link in place for the Pan Am Games. That is a commitment that we have made, and we are going to follow through on that.

We have said that we are going to put an EA in place in order to begin the process of electrification. We are going to do that.

We have said that we are going to have trains on that track that can be converted to electric when the corridor is ready. We are going to follow through on that.

I think the third party should be supporting us on this. This is a very, very environmentally responsible transportation solution.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I believe her backbenchers are interested in knowing if the Minister of Transportation is interested in what they want. They voted unanimously to electrify by 2015, and yet, clearly, that's not what's going to happen here.

Last month, in fact, the McGuinty government announced it would conduct its own environmental assessment, just like you heard the minister say, to electrify the air-rail link. So I'd like to know one thing: Can the minister tell us when this environmental assessment is expected to be completed? Will the McGuinty government act on this issue in a timely manner, or are they planning on dragging this out until after the next election?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think the member opposite knows that it takes a number of years to do an environmental assessment. We are going to follow the rules, and we're going to make sure that all of the issues are dealt with.

The member opposite has not talked in this House about what it means to electrify a corridor. The member opposite has not talked about the overhead catenary that has to be put in place. The member opposite has not talked about the booster stations that may need to be put in place along the line. We have to make sure that safety issues are dealt with. We have to make sure that the full environmental assessment is done.

We've made a commitment to 2015. We're going to follow through on that commitment.

On the issue of backbenchers and members of our government who want to have an opinion about a particular issue, we're not interested in silencing that. We want that debate to take place. We want that conversation to take place. I welcome the member for York South-Weston and the member for Davenport having a discussion with their constituents. We're going to follow through and do this as quickly as possible—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Com-

munity safety is a top priority for my constituents. It is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that our communities are safe for individuals, families and, most importantly, our children. Oak Ridges-Markham is developing at such a rapid pace, the constituents in my riding are concerned about their safety due to the congestion of cars on the roads, new subdivisions being built and thousands of new residents moving in.

On behalf of my constituents and all Ontarians, I'm hoping the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services can share with this House what he's doing to ensure the safety of Ontarians.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Over the past seven years, our government has provided significant financial support. We've put more than 2,000 additional police officers on the streets since 2003. We're the only province in Canada to dedicate its entire allocation of funding under the federal police officer recruitment program to front-line police officers, resulting in another 325 new officers on the streets.

We're investing in community-based crime prevention programs, such as the safer and vital communities grant program. We have also made investments to keep our communities safe through the guns-and-gangs investments. We've invested over \$100 million in three highly successful programs: the guns and gangs task force, the Toronto anti-violence intervention strategy and provincial anti-violence intervention strategy. We announced earlier this year that we are allocating an additional \$15 million to PAVIS over the next two years. It has already contributed to several local success stories in the York region.

We have done much and there's much more to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The member for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, the member for Peterborough and the member from Scarborough East-Pickering participated in question period today, and instead of raising issues that might be of concern to their constituents, they used question period today as an opportunity to attack opposition members of the House.

Mr. Speaker, in the past, you have ruled and suggested that that's an inappropriate use of question period time. I would respectfully request that you review Hansard and report back to the House as to whether or not you believe those questions were appropriate this morning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the member from Wellington-Halton Hills for the question. No, I don't intend to review Hansard, but I do intend to address the House on the very issue that he raises.

I remind the honourable member that the very issue he raises goes both ways. As part of the role of the opposition, your approach is to attack the government too. What I would like to do is find a balance, because I recognize there is an important event that is taking place

this year and we need to find the balance within this chamber of allowing for healthy debate for the opposition to do its role, to keep the government accountable, and for the government to talk about its agenda and its priorities as well.

I listened; I did. I can honestly say that the Clerk and I consulted during question period and I was listening closely to those questions. I can assure the honourable member I will be having more to say in that regard.

### VISITORS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to introduce, now that they've arrived, my daughter, Sarah Witmer, and her friend Stephanie Courschesne from North Bay.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Welcome to Queen's Park.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have with us today in the members' gallery the 2011 students from the University of Akron Canadian studies work experience program. They are David Eidam and Andy Karas. For the next 10 weeks David will be working in the office of Cheri DiNovo, MPP, Parkdale-High Park, and Andy will be with Jim Wilson, MPP for Simcoe-Grey. Would all members please join me in welcoming these two students from the United States?

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### EPILEPSY

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak about Epilepsy Action Day, and I welcome representatives from Epilepsy Ontario and the Epilepsy Cure Initiative to Queen's Park. I also welcome Dianne McKenzie and Deanna MacDonald from Epilepsy Durham.

I commend the work of these organizations in promoting awareness and understanding of epilepsy and advocating for policy issues of concern to the 140,000 Ontario adults and children impacted by epilepsy. These issues include developing evidence-based standards for diagnosis and treatment; ensuring that individuals have access to anti-epileptic drugs that maintain their independence, productivity and quality of life; and increasing access for individuals with epilepsy to receive ODSP benefits.

Most individuals with epilepsy receive treatment from their family physicians, who often lack specialized training and knowledge in the area of epilepsy. They may also

lack specialized diagnosis and assessment tools. There is only one epileptologist for every 4,000 epilepsy patients in Ontario. As a result, there are long wait-lists to receive specialized care.

While much has been accomplished, there is still much more to do, and I thank Epilepsy Ontario for their ongoing efforts.

#### EPILEPSY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I add my voice to that of my colleague from Whitby-Oshawa to welcome those who are here from various organizations and witnessing epilepsy awareness. I particularly want to point out Margaret Maye and Gary Neumann from my own riding, who have been tireless advocates for this cause.

Folk may not know that one in 100 people suffers from epilepsy. Next to headaches, it's the most common neurological disorder.

Also to add to what my colleague has already said, we're looking at special needs for a special diet, particularly for those who are on ODSP. I know that the government is reviewing that right now. I would ask them to take particular care to include epileptics in that review. Also brought to my attention, again by Gary and Margaret in my own riding, is the need for a centre where people can get dietary advice and support, because diet can really be one of the best treatments for epilepsy. We need more information—it's a difficult diet to follow—and we need more support, especially for parents struggling around that issue with their children, and also for adult epileptics.

Again, welcome to Queen's Park. Certainly on March 26, I'd ask all my colleagues to wear purple and take a picture of themselves and send it to our tireless advocates. I intend on doing that.

#### ELMIRA MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** I'm pleased to rise in the House today to talk about an event in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, a yearly event, the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival, a wonderful event that's been going on for over four decades.

In 1965, the first festival was organized. They expected to see about 2,500 attendees; they received that year over 10,000 people. The festival has continued to grow every year since 1965, and in 2000 it reached a capacity of 66,529 visitors. This became the world's largest maple syrup festival, according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

It's my pleasure to congratulate all of the volunteers. This is a great, fun festival. Over 2,000 volunteers make this possible in Elmira and all of Woolwich township. I thank all of the volunteers for their hard work. Last year, the festival, under organizer-chair Cheryl Peterson, saw \$50,000 donated to local non-profit and charitable organizations.

This past Friday we tapped the first tree in a 100-acre maple bush. I did that along with Fred Martin, the president of the Waterloo-Wellington Maple Syrup Producers Association, Robert Richmond and, of course, Doug Cassie and his wife, Cecilia, from the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association.

Mayor Todd Cowan of Woolwich township and I would like to welcome all of you, look forward to seeing you, and thank everyone for their hard work with the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival.

JEFF MAULER

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** On Tuesday, January 25, a Nepean-Carleton resident became an international star. Jeff Mauler, a DJ with one of my favourite radio stations, the new Hot 89.9 in Ottawa, became the only Canadian to stand in for Regis Philbin on the Live with Regis and Kelly show.

Mauler secured the spot as a finalist in the “men of radio co-host for a day search,” where literally hundreds of thousands of radio listeners across Ottawa and throughout the rest of North America voted for the best of the best in male radio announcers on this continent. It was no surprise to us in Nepean-Carleton that the best of the best would come from Barrhaven, edging out other radio personalities from big American stations in big American cities.

Mauler was helped by his local and loyal Ottawa fan base, affectionately known as the Hotties, a take on the station's Hot 89.9 name. They mobilized on Twitter, and of course, as an avid tweeter myself, I was able to follow the excitement. On finding out that he was a finalist, Mauler said, “I just want to do my city and country proud on the world stage.” Indeed, Jeff Mauler certainly did. Kelly Ripa playfully said, “I know you're a big deal in Ottawa. If you and Celine Dion were married, you'd be the king and queen of Canada.”

Congratulations, Mauler, on the honour and for putting our community on the map.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I'd like to take this opportunity to discuss the McGuinty government's record with respect to the hydro debt retirement charge. The hydro debt retirement charge was added to every Ontarian's hydro bill in 1999 to pay for the \$19.4 billion in stranded debt that resulted from the previous government's failed restructuring of the electricity sector.

From 1999 to 2003, the previous Conservative government actually added to the Hydro stranded debt. It rose by \$1 billion over four years, from \$19.4 billion to \$20.5 billion. In contrast, Mr. McGuinty's government has reduced the hydro stranded debt by about \$1 billion in each of the last six years. As a result, the hydro stranded debt is currently \$5.7 billion lower than in 2003.

The McGuinty government has been responsibly paying down the inherited debt while also making important

investments in the energy sector. We added 8,400 megawatts of new, cleaner generation and 5,000 kilometres of transmission lines, roughly the distance from Toronto to Whitehorse, Yukon. These investments mean that Ontario will be completely coal-free by 2014. Eliminating coal-fired generation will be like taking seven million cars—almost every car in Ontario today—off the roads.

The McGuinty government has effectively managed the transformation of our energy system. We have reduced the hydro stranded debt we inherited from the previous Conservative government while also investing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. The member from Durham.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** After that statement, I don't know where to begin. However, I will start with what I have in front of me here.

There are actually two meetings in my riding tomorrow that are very important. One is about protecting the Oak Ridges moraine. It's a round table being hosted by the mayor of Uxbridge, Gerri Lynn O'Connor, in Uxbridge. The discussion will include representatives from a number of provincial ministries as well as surrounding municipalities. I want to commend Gerri Lynn O'Connor for taking leadership on this issue. Our municipalities are taking action on this important issue. Unfortunately, we cannot say the same about Premier McGuinty.

The second meeting is hosted by the Clarington Wind Concerns. Dr. Robert McMurtry will be giving a presentation on the potential health effects of industrial wind turbines. Dr. McMurtry is the former dean of the University of Western Ontario medical school and former federal Deputy Minister of Health. Premier McGuinty won't listen to him, unfortunately.

Dr. McMurtry will be joined by David Colling, Eric Gillespie and Clarington Wind Concerns organizer, Heather Rutherford. They are calling on the government to halt wind turbine development until proper third party medical studies can be done.

In contrast, the McGuinty government has broken their election promise to put a moratorium on wind turbines. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has committed in this Legislature to give back decision-making to local communities, where it belongs.

1510

There's another issue that's troubling me as well, and that is the lack of extending the 407 highway. Where—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## YOUTH IN YORK WEST

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** It gives me great pleasure to announce that on February 27 past, some 50 youths from the York West riding went to see a Raptors game at the

ACC, thanks to the generosity of Maurizio Gherardini, the VP and assistant GM of the Toronto Raptors.

Students from schools across the community, and who attend the Chalkfarm running and reading club, joined local 31 division police sergeant Stephen Hicks and a group from the For Kicks and Generation Change programs to see the Toronto Raptors game this past weekend against the Dallas Mavericks. Unfortunately, they lost.

These local programs, offered in York West, help improve literacy, physical fitness and social interaction amongst at-risk youth in our community. Graduates of this program are so grateful for the friendship and guidance they receive and, in return, come back to mentor the younger generations taking part in these programs.

I am delighted that professional sports organizations like the Toronto Raptors understand the need for community involvement and how important it is to reward those youth who make every effort to excel by challenging themselves and those around them.

Once again, I would like to thank the Toronto Raptors organization for providing the tickets, and the basketball players who took the time to speak to our youth, giving them an experience they will never forget.

## EPILEPSY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Today we are wearing purple ribbons in honour of those who are here today, because today is epilepsy action day at Queen's Park.

March is the month during which epilepsy organizations hold their celebrations of March Epilepsy Awareness Month. Specifically, March 26, Purple Day, is a global day for promoting epilepsy awareness in countries around the world. People from around the globe are asked to wear purple today and spread the word about epilepsy. Even the CN Tower in Toronto, and Niagara Falls, will illuminate their buildings in purple to showcase their support.

All of us are thrilled that today we are joined by a number of representatives who have a passion and belief in promoting that awareness for epilepsy. I'd like to introduce some of them to the House: Margaret Maye, the president of the Epilepsy Cure Initiative; Gary Neumann; and their son Thomas.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, since March 26 has never been officially declared by the government of Ontario as epilepsy awareness day, I would like all members of the House to support the resolution today, which says that March 26 should be epilepsy awareness purple day in the province of Ontario, to be celebrated annually during Epilepsy Awareness Month, with the hope that we can build greater understanding and support for people with epilepsy, reduce the stigma, find a cure for seizures and improve the quality of life for our communities in Ontario.

To all those who are here today, I say thank you very much and congratulations. Good epilepsy special day.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I want to provide a little history on the debt retirement charge. In 1999, the Conservative government tried and failed to privatize and sell off Ontario's hydro system. After their experiment failed, Ontario taxpayers were stuck with the \$19-billion tab. For the next four years, the Conservatives failed to pay off any of that debt. In fact, by 2003, the debt had risen another \$1 billion, despite the fact that every Ontarian had been paying for it on their electricity bill, since 2002, through the debt retirement charge.

On the other hand, the McGuinty government has responsibly managed the energy file. We have used the debt retirement charge as it was intended: to pay down the Ontario hydro debt. Over the past six years, we have reduced the hydro debt by \$6 billion. We've done this despite being handed a crumbling energy infrastructure badly needing repair. We've modernized the grid by adding 5,000 kilometres of new transmission lines. Gone are the days of rolling brownouts. We've added 8,400 megawatts of new, cleaner generation. The McGuinty government has been cleaning up the mess left by the previous government, while we're also preparing for the future.

The facts speak for themselves. We have paid down the debt; they added to it. We've modernized the grid and have made power reliable again; they let the infrastructure decay. That was neglected. Through our long-term energy plan, we're building a stronger electricity system for a better future for the people of Peterborough riding and all Ontarians.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr40, An Act to revive S.L. McNally Consulting Services Inc.;

Bill Pr43, An Act respecting the Ursuline Religious of the Diocese of London in Ontario.

Your committee further recommends that the fees and the actual costs of printing at all stages be remitted on Bill Pr43, An Act respecting the Ursuline Religious of the Diocese of London in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC  
AMENDMENT ACT  
(ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE  
VEHICLES), 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT  
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE  
(VÉHICULES D'ASSISTANCE ROUTIÈRE)

Mr. Dunlop moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 156, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to safety precautions to take when approaching roadside assistance vehicles / Projet de loi 156, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les mesures de sécurité à prendre à l'approche de véhicules d'assistance routière.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act. At present, the driver of a motor vehicle is required to slow down upon approaching an emergency vehicle that is stopped on the same side of a highway as that on which the driver is travelling. The bill extends that requirement to cover cases where a driver approaches a roadside assistance vehicle that is stopped on that side. I want to point out that there are around five million roadside assistance calls a year in Ontario, provided by 4,500 tow truck operators across the province.

If I could say, some people are in the audience today. I'd ask your permission to introduce them. The ladies and gentlemen are: Nick Parks, Tim Georgeoff, Rick Mauro, Korey Kennedy, Christine Hogarth, Henry Westenbrink, Ryan Kerr and Rick Botelho. They're all from CAA. I really appreciate your work on this—and Brian Patterson, of course, from the Ontario Safety League. Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your help on this bill.

## PESTICIDES AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR LES PESTICIDES

Mr. Brownell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 157, An Act to amend the Pesticides Act / Projet de loi 157, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pesticides.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** This amendment act requires warning signs approved by the director to be placed on vehicles used for spraying pesticides on or beside a high-

way, and requires the person who performs a land extermination in an area that is not a residential area to post signs in accordance with the regulations and provide public notice of the extermination in various ways. As well, it has other issues to deal with the promotion of public health and safety.

## EPILEPSY AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA JOURNÉE  
DE SENSIBILISATION À L'ÉPILEPSIE

Mr. Ruprecht moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 159, An Act to proclaim Epilepsy Awareness Day / Projet de loi 159, Loi proclamant la Journée de sensibilisation à l'épilepsie.

1520

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** March 26 has never been officially recognized as Epilepsy Awareness Day, and we all know that we would like to help out. This day will be celebrated from now on, with the hope that we can build a greater understanding, support people with epilepsy, reduce the stigma, find a cure for seizures and improve the quality of life for those in our community who have this disease.

## MOTIONS

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 69 be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members have heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## YVONNE O'NEILL

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Yvonne O'Neill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, and the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize and pay tribute to the memory of a former member of this House, Yvonne O'Neill.

I would like to begin by extending my sincere condolences to her husband, Pat, who I understand is watching, and also to her three daughters, Margaret, Cheryl and Patti, as well as her dear friend Jane Dunbar, who is here today attending this tribute in the Legislature.

Yvonne was born here in the city of Toronto in 1936. She went on to graduate from the University of Toronto and the Ontario College of Education. She fulfilled her dream of becoming a teacher in 1958, leading a classroom for another six years. She ultimately took her passion for education to what is now the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic District School Board, winning election as a trustee.

Yvonne excelled, as she did in almost everything in life, as an elected official, earning a reputation as a most trustworthy and honest politician. Soon after her first election, the voters recognized her immense leadership capabilities by giving her the honour of serving as the board's chairperson. Yvonne was steadfastly committed to advancing and strengthening public education in Ontario, and for this we are all grateful.

In 1987, Yvonne turned her eye to the provincial Legislature, winning the seat in the riding of Ottawa-Rideau. Her educational knowledge and her expertise were immediately recognized by Premier David Peterson, and he appointed Yvonne to serve as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, who at that time was Sean Conway.

It was in her role as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education that I had the pleasure of first meeting Yvonne, since at that time I was serving as chair of the Waterloo Region District School Board. Then in 1990, when I was elected to the Legislature, we had the opportunity to develop a closer friendship. We had much in common since we had both started our professional lives as teachers, both become trustees and chairpersons of our respective boards and then moved on to become MPPs.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to know how much I appreciated Yvonne's support, mentoring and guidance as I adapted to life at Queen's Park following my 1990 election. I will always be grateful to her for making the road I travelled much easier.

I got to know her as a very hard-working and most dedicated MPP, but what I will remember most about Yvonne—and I think anybody who knew her or had the privilege of working with her—is that she always had a most cheery and joyful disposition. She was a real pleasure to spend time with. She touched the lives of many, many people, including my own. She was a very caring person who always lived life to the fullest.

Upon leaving this Legislature in 1995, Yvonne never fully retired. She served as a returning officer with Elections Canada until mid-July 2010, when cancer eventually forced her to relocate to her beloved cottage in Nova Scotia.

Yvonne was a devout Catholic who immersed herself in the activities of her parish, volunteering in her archdiocese for much of her life.

As I said before, no matter where she went or who she met, she had a very positive impact on the lives of the people she touched.

Yvonne was the devoted wife of Patrick for 50 years. She is survived today by three very successful daughters: Margaret, Cheryl and Patti.

On September 6, 2010, cancer took from us a passionate, loving and hard-working public servant and a wonderful human being. Surrounded by her loved ones, Yvonne's earthly journey came to an end. But Yvonne O'Neill's memory will live on in the children she inspired, the constituents she represented, and the colleagues and friends she worked with here at Queen's Park and elsewhere.

She was a tireless advocate for her constituents and for every Ontarian. Yvonne believed very strongly in the potential of our province. She loved it dearly and she committed herself to serving it.

On behalf of Tim Hudak and our caucus, I would like to again extend at this time our sincere sympathy to her husband and her daughters, and also our heartfelt gratitude to them for allowing Yvonne to give so much to the people in the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** If you detect a sense of emotion in my colleague's speech, I think it speaks to Yvonne O'Neill.

Like the member who just spoke, I was elected in 1990. I came to this place bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, not knowing much about what to expect when I got here. I think most members will recognize this in their own time here: When you first get here, you look at others to try to find out, "Are there things other people are doing that would serve me well as an MPP and as a human being, as a fellow colleague?" Yvonne was one of those people. I freely admit that some of what I've learned, I learned from Yvonne.

In my time with her from 1990 to 1995, I served on committee with her on a number of different issues, mostly around education, but also others. What I learned from Yvonne was this: At the end of the day, we're all legislators, we're all here to represent our ridings, and you don't have to be nasty. That's something that I hope I'm able to do. I know at times all of us, myself included, get in the debate and raise points with passion. But what I learned from Yvonne was, don't take it personally, respect the person who is your opponent in whatever battle you're in, and try to find some common ground so you can work with these people to move things forward.

I was a member of the government from 1990 to 1995 and she was a member of the opposition. She understood that in her constituency she had to do things in order to advance projects that were important to her and the people she represented. I can tell you all kinds of stories about things that Yvonne would come over and talk to us about. I often go to the other side and chat with the government about things. That's something I learned from Yvonne. She would constantly be advocating on behalf of her community with the government. She was not enamoured with the NDP government. I don't think she

was a New Democrat; in fact, I know she was a Liberal. But she understood we were the government of the day and that she had to work with us. I can give you plenty of examples where myself and others who had to deal with Yvonne always came away from our exchanges, either on committee or privately, when we were discussing projects, with a sense that we could trust Yvonne. When she gave her word on something, that was the word, and you never had to worry about it changing in any way, and at the end of the day she wasn't going to bushwhack you, as we see in the politics of any Legislature, let alone this one.

1530

I must say that one of the things she and I shared was a passion for making sure that young people are able to learn more than one language. I am very fortunate. I'm fluently bilingual. I speak French and English and write both. Yvonne understood that that was an important thing for her children and the people she represented, but she also saw it from beyond that. She was a tireless advocate, both in her time in government from 1987-90 and in opposition, in support of French-language education in this province. As a francophone and a member of the Ontario francophone community, I say to Yvonne on behalf of all of us, un gros remerciement pour ton dévouement à la communauté francophone.

I would also say that she understood we are a multicultural society. Sometimes we get stuck in our thing, you know—I'm a francophone; I'm an anglophone—and we tend to concentrate on those two languages. But there are many other languages out there, as we well know today, from across the world that come to this country. She understood that we need to find our way as a province, as a Legislature and as a country about how we can accommodate those who come to Canada, so that they can continue celebrating the uniqueness of where they come from and find a way to become Canadians. She was one I had some chats with over the years that quite frankly opened my eyes on some issues because of the riding she represented and her particular views.

She had a passion for her cottage. I remember on committee travel on a number of occasions—and you raised it—where she would talk about the times she had with her family, which were so few when she was elected to this place, to get to the cottage back on the east coast. I know many conversations I had with her in regard to how important that was to her, and I would imagine how important it is to her family till today.

I too share that experience. We've had a cottage in the family since the early 1960s, and our family continues going there two and three generations later as a result of that particular experience we share, which is called cottage life. I think the family will remember Yvonne through those experiences and those times they shared, not only in their home life in Ottawa but in Nova Scotia.

I would say to those members who didn't know Yvonne: You really missed knowing somebody who was truly a unique person in the sense that she really brought

passion and integrity to what she did. She was, quite frankly, a very good person to deal with.

On behalf of Andrea Horwath, the leader of the New Democratic Party, my friend Howard Hampton, Mr. Marchese, Mr. Kormos and the rest our caucus, some of us who served with her, we want to extend our condolences to Jane, who is here today, and Pat—we know you're watching back home. We just say to you, thank you for having let us share your wife, your mother and your friend for the years she was here. She was truly a friend to us as well.

**Hon. John Milloy:** It's a real honour for me to rise today, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, to pay tribute to Yvonne O'Neill and, on behalf of the entire caucus, our Premier and all the Liberal members, to extend our condolences to her family and her many friends.

I knew Yvonne quite well. I knew her from a very different perspective. I actually worked for Yvonne O'Neill. From 1987 to 1989, I had the privilege of being her legislative assistant, at the ripe old age of 22. We kept in touch over the years, and I remain grateful to her, not only for giving me my first job out of university but also for her friendship and the many valuable lessons about politics and public life that she passed on to me.

Yvonne came to Queen's Park, as we have heard, with a very impressive record in terms of community service. A teacher by training, education was certainly her passion. She had served many years, before coming here, as a trustee on the Carleton Roman Catholic Separate School Board, including a term as chair. As a result, her first assignment as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education was a bit of a dream come true for Yvonne. I know that the minister of the day relied heavily on her experience and perspective in navigating the sometimes complicated world of education. Although Yvonne was always happy to offer strategic advice and support, she never forgot that at the end of the day it was always about what was best for Ontario students.

Yvonne maintained her interest in education and social policy following her term as parliamentary assistant. She served in a number of key legislative roles, including Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, and I know a real highlight for her was her appointment to the special committee of the Legislature that studied the Charlottetown accord in the early 1990s.

As we have heard, and I certainly agree, Yvonne was a great constituency member. She spent many long hours shuttling between Queen's Park and Ottawa to attend events and meetings, and it was no surprise, therefore, when she bucked a bit of a provincial tide in 1990 and won re-election.

She was a proud member of the Liberal opposition. She served in a number of critic roles, as well as being deputy opposition whip.

What drove Yvonne O'Neill? A number of things. One was certainly her passion for education and learning. Another was a sense of pride in representing the Ottawa area in the Legislature. One of Yvonne's major concerns was that provincial matters didn't receive appropriate

attention in the nation's capital, which always seemed so obsessed with federal politics. She worked hard to correct that and was a key member of the Ottawa–Carleton caucus that arose during those years, and was quite a force to be reckoned with within the Peterson government.

Yvonne was also aware of the important example that she set for other women interested in politics. Although the role of women in the Legislature had progressed considerably by the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were still many barriers to break down. Yvonne, as we've heard, had forged many strong ties with other female members on all sides of the House and was never afraid to promote issues of equality. She often spoke about the role all women MPPs played in blazing a trail for the generation to follow. Of course, with three daughters, the next generation of women was a personal as well as a professional preoccupation for Yvonne.

Anyone who knew Yvonne O'Neill knew that family came first. Her husband of 50 years, Patrick, who I understand is watching this afternoon, had a wonderful sense of humour, as well as having one of the fastest driving times between Ottawa and Toronto. He was always there to offer the kind of support, reassurance and grounding that all of us in this Legislature recognize is crucial to do our jobs.

Her three daughters, Margaret, Cheryl and Patti, were an incredible source of pride for Yvonne, and she was always there to offer them support and advice and celebrate their many successes.

Yvonne also boasted a large circle of friends. I, too, welcome Jane Dunbar, her friend who is here in the gallery today. Yvonne was always the first to acknowledge a struggle or celebrate a success by sending a personal card or her many, many bouquets of flowers that became a bit of a signature item for her.

Yvonne's thoughtfulness and approach to life was inspired by her faith. A strong Roman Catholic, Yvonne believed that public life was a way to live her beliefs and answer a basic calling to tend to the needs of others.

The election of 1995 was a time of great change in this Legislature, and it saw the end of Yvonne O'Neill's formal political career. Yvonne continued her involvement in the community, becoming a returning officer for Elections Canada, and enjoyed her many grandchildren.

I bumped into her not that long ago at an event in Ottawa and found the elegant, gracious woman that I always remembered enjoying a busy and active retirement.

If you were to poll all members of the Legislature, past and present, and ask them the key to success in this place, I venture most would sum it up in one word: balance—the ability to balance public life and family life, to be part of the cut and thrust of politics while still maintaining your principles and values.

Yvonne O'Neill achieved that balance. She made an outstanding contribution to her community and to this Legislature, while never forgetting those closest to her and the beliefs that she so deeply held.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the honourable members for their tributes today.

Our condolences go out to the O'Neill family: to Patrick O'Neill, who, as we know, is watching today, and to the daughters and the grandchildren. On behalf of the Legislature, I will ensure that copies of Hansard and a DVD of today's proceedings will be forwarded to the family.

1540

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### GREENBELT

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** This week marks the sixth anniversary of Ontario's greenbelt. The greenbelt is a critical part of our government's plan for building healthier communities. It is a lasting legacy for our children and for future generations.

When the McGuinty government created the greenbelt in 2005, we aimed to preserve agricultural land in the greater Golden Horseshoe as a continuing, healthy and secure supply of locally grown food; to sustain the countryside, rural and small towns; and to contribute to the economic viability of farming communities. It is a 1.8-million-acre working countryside, protected to ensure Ontarians today and tomorrow can enjoy its benefits. There are approximately 7,000 farms on the greenbelt. Those farms boast some of the most productive land in Canada.

Just yesterday, I met a farmer at OGRA/ROMA who shared with me that this year marks a milestone for him. His family began working their farm, located in the greenbelt, 200 years ago, a business they hope to keep in their family for generations to come. His story demonstrates the perseverance of a farm, the farm family and the love of their land, a precious natural resource our government thinks should be preserved, though not all members of the House agree.

With more than half of the greenbelt land being used for agricultural purposes, Ontarians should be proud of the vast diversity, the strong environmental leadership and the economic impact the land and farmers on it provide to this province. The Holland Marsh houses one fifth of Ontario's vegetable farms, growing crops such as sweet corn, pumpkins, carrots and onions. Almost half of Ontario's fruit farms are located in the greenbelt, producing cherries, grapes and peaches, to name just a few. In fact, Niagara's 2.1 million tender fruit trees produce 800,000 baskets of fruit, which if lined up, would stretch along the QEW from Kingston to Niagara Falls.

Whether it is fruit, vegetables, livestock, wines, cheeses, grains or horticultural goods, the greenbelt has it all. Agricultural products that are grown in the greenbelt are coveted, and they're celebrated both around the world and here at home, from Niagara's iconic peach and re-

owned ice wines to classic summer fare like strawberries and sweet corn.

Working together with the greenbelt fund, our broader public sector investment fund is taking our commitment to Ontario foods even further. We are helping to connect farmers, food processors and distributors to increase the amount of local food served in daycares, schools, hospitals and long-term-care facilities. For example, Cohn Farms is taking an innovative and collaborative approach to supplying the broader public sector with fresh Ontario produce. They're working with other producers to build a co-packing line and expand the diversity of the foods they supply.

The Vineland Growers co-op, Ontario's oldest co-op and largest packer and shipper of fresh tender fruit, has been added to the weekly product list of Gordon Food Service, a distributor who has recently made Ontario food a key priority. By putting more of Ontario's fresh, healthy, local food in public institutions, we are investing in a strong future for our families and for agriculture.

Many citizens, municipalities and community groups have been enthusiastic proponents for expanding the greenbelt in their communities. They recognize the greenbelt's benefits as a source of healthy local food. Farmers and urbanites are realizing that they share a future centred on food security and the ability to grow and consume fresh, nutritious foods. Demand for local food is rising rapidly. Greenbelt farmers have eight million consumers within a half day's drive.

The McGuinty government set out six years ago to permanently protect this precious asset. While some members of this House would rather pave highway over this green space, we think we got it right, and so do most of the people in the province. An Environics research poll conducted last year found that 90% of Ontarians support the greenbelt and agree that it is one of the most important contributions of our generation to the future of Ontario.

When agricultural lands are lost to development, they are gone for good.

I would like to close with the words of Eric Bowman, a third-generation greenbelt farmer. He and his wife run Gallery on the Farm, an organic beef farm. As Eric says, "Once you pave it, it's gone. You have to conserve this precious land that we're sitting on—not for ourselves, but for generations down the road."

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** On behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the many farmers who make the Holland Marsh and the greenbelt important contributors to the agriculture that they're making. We understand how hard they work and how important they are to our province.

We all agree that protecting agricultural land and ensuring the future of our farms should be a priority for any government. But we also know that the best way to protect farmland is to implement policies and support that make it possible for farmers to be successful and profitable in farming it.

Minister, if you force all the farmers out of Ontario there will be no local food and no agriculture, not even in the greenbelt. I support local food. However, unlike the minister, I understand that we need the farmers to produce it. Since 2003, when Dalton McGuinty was elected, Ontario's beef cow herds have declined by 18.4%, and the sow herd declined by over 20% since 2007. The Ontario Cattlemen's Association has said that they expect the numbers for 2010 to be even lower when they come in.

We've heard from farmers who are going to the food bank to get food because they can't pay for it out of the returns from their farms. Under the McGuinty government's watch we lost the CanGro plant in St. Davids. This government announced with great fanfare that a fruit snack company would be taking over the plant and creating a market for fruit farmers, and yet it never happened. I guess you just forgot to send out the press release to announce that it wasn't going to happen.

As we lose farmers, we also lose spin-off industries. We risk reducing our processing capacity to a level where the agriculture industry can't recover to the same level. During the pre-budget hearings, we heard about the impact that these losses are having. At least one feed mill has already closed. There have been layoffs at the Burlington processing plant. Several transport companies have closed or been sold. Farm animal veterinarians are merging practices or switching to pet care.

We are not getting the support that other provinces are. In Ontario, 34% of agriculture support is provided by the province; 65% is provided by the federal government. In Alberta, 60% is provided by the province; 40% is provided by the federal government. In Quebec, 67% is provided by—you guessed it—the province; 33% is provided by the federal government.

If Ontario farmers get fair treatment and a level playing field, they cannot only provide great local food, they can compete with the rest of the world. Our farmers have been clear: Current programs aren't working. They need a business risk management program based on the cost of production.

Last week our leader, Tim Hudak, spoke at the Ontario Cattlemen's annual general meeting and reiterated his commitment that, if elected, we will work with farm leaders to implement business risk management programs for all commodities.

Farmers are tired of jurisdictional Ping-Pong. Grain farmers had a pilot program that was funded jointly by the farmers and the province. Now the province says it can't continue unless the federal government contributes. That's exactly the same thing that the minister said last year. They extended it for one year, but here we are waiting again. The program is not bankable and predictable if the farmers are forced to beg the government each year for its extension and are forced to make planning decisions, and applying for money to do that, without assurances that there's support there at the end of the year.

**1550**

Our farmers need a program they can count on. Eight long months ago, the ag stability coalition said, "Until the

federal, provincial and territorial ministers decide on adopting predictable and bankable programs nationally, the OASC is calling on the Ontario Minister of Agriculture ... Mitchell to step up and invest in Ontario farmers by funding the programs developed here in Ontario without waiting for the federal government...." The OFA is quoted as saying, "Because of the urgent need in Ontario, the provincial government must commit to and finance its share of the business risk management program costs regardless of whether the federal government funds the program."

Farmers are telling you that you can't wait for the federal government. They're telling you that they need help now. Minister, why aren't you listening to them? Farmers shouldn't have to wait weeks or months or years for the politically opportune moment to announce the program.

Minister, tomorrow, Ontario Pork and Ontario Cattle-men will be here hosting a breakfast once again to tell this government how much they need a program that works and that they can count on. If you truly support Ontario's farmers, then tomorrow morning you will announce a business risk management program based on the cost of production.

Minister, the farmers are waiting and they can't keep waiting for the opportune moment for you to think of their needs instead of the government's needs. They need help and they need it now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** On behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond today to the Minister of Agriculture.

I understand that the government wants to, over and over again, pat itself on the back for the greenbelt, but the minister should be careful about patting herself on the back and saying that farmers in the greenbelt are doing well, because the evidence is growing that they're not doing well. In fact, the evidence is growing that there are real challenges there. Let me just list a few.

What we've seen over the approaching eight years now that the McGuinty Liberals have been government is the closure of one processing facility after another in the greenbelt. We've had farmers come here and say, "What am I supposed to do with my produce? If the processing facility is closed, where am I to go with my produce?" And the minister knows that's the case. You have literally had farmers who had fruit rotting on the vine because there is no place to go with it to have it processed. That is not a key to success in the future, and it makes many, many farm operations in the greenbelt less and less viable. The minister knows that is the case.

Second, just a while ago, I had an opportunity to go visit with a dairy farmer who lives in the greenbelt. What he wanted to talk to me about was hydro rates, because the milking of cows and then storing the milk and processing the milk require cooling—electricity. He was embarrassed to tell me what his hydro bill was. He said, "I don't know how I can continue to operate with my

hydro bill skyrocketing like this almost every month." And that is the case for anybody who is trying to operate a dairy farm in the greenbelt and anywhere near the greenbelt, and virtually everywhere else in the province too. How do you pay the escalating cost of hydro-electricity, especially since dairy farms tend to be more electricity-intensive than many other forms of farming?

So far, we haven't had an answer from this government. Yes, we've heard lots of press releases, but when farmers are embarrassed to show you their monthly hydro bill, it says that there's a serious problem happening here.

The government wants to pat itself on the shoulder and say that it's doing something in terms of ensuring that local food produce is consumed locally. But the reality is that in comparison to jurisdictions like Illinois and Nova Scotia, this government isn't doing much at all. New Democrats have put forward an Ontario Buy Local Food Act which would require government ministries to purchase at least 20% local food by 2015, if it were passed by this Legislature. I think of all the government entities located in the greater Toronto area that should be using at least 20% local food but are not. I think of what impact that would have on farmers trying to continue to be viable in the greenbelt if that were to be pursued. Alas, that's not happening with this government. Yes, we see a few grants here or something tabled over here in terms of some financial incentives, but I think it's quite viable to say to colleges, universities, schools, to hospitals, homes for the aged and all of the civil service operations in the greater Toronto area, "20% of the food that you serve in your cafeteria must be from local produce." That would be real action to help farmers who live and work in the greenbelt remain viable.

I can say to the government, we're waiting. If Illinois can do it, if Nova Scotia can do it, why can't Ontario do it? Rather than the government patting itself on the back, let's get down to some action, some things that will really make a difference for farmers who are increasingly finding it difficult to remain viable while living and working in the greenbelt.

## PETITIONS

### OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's very appropriate that I get up to speak now in the couple of minutes you afford me here, because they were championing the greenbelt.

My petition reads as follows:

"Protection of Oak Ridges Moraine," in the greenbelt  
"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario"—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This is important. Listen up.

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the Oak Ridges moraine," in the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the Oak Ridges moraine" and greenbelt; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier government to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permit process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries" in the greenbelt; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned" of John O'Toole's riding of Durham "ask that the Minister of the Environment initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the Oak Ridges moraine" greenbelt "until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to prevent contamination of the Oak Ridges moraine," in the greenbelt.

I'm pleased to sign and support that, and there is a meeting tomorrow in my riding of Durham on this very issue.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Sudbury, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning, a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients ... ; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens" of northeastern Ontario.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Lakshman—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Petitions?

#### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition signed by board members of the York Pioneer and Historical Society, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario's inactive cemeteries are constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

"Ontario's cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province's cultural heritage;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government must pass Bill 126, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2010, to prohibit the desecration of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario."

As I agree with this, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

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#### ONLINE LOTTERY TERMINALS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here that I'm presenting on behalf of the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London that one of his constituents, Laura MacFarlane from Shedden, presented to him. On his behalf, I'd like to read it into the record.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are not enough lottery online terminals to provide all the retailers that should have them. To get an online terminal, a new rural retailer needs a radius of at least 25 kilometres with no online terminals, or meet an out-of-date criterion to sell instant scratch tickets in competition with city locations. This makes it nearly impossible for new rural retailers to achieve an online terminal to remain competitive. OLG now offers more appealing games online (e.g. Poker and Lotto Max) and the trend of society is more geared toward online. Please accept this as a request for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to mandate the availability of more online terminals.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Request an increase in the amount of lottery online terminals made available so that Shedden Variety might be able to provide online lottery sales in our community."

I present this petition, as I said, on behalf of the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

#### TRAVAILLEURS SUPPLÉANTS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'ai une pétition qui me vient de la Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario et du Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud :

« Attendu que les grèves et les lock-out sont rares; en moyenne, 97 % des conventions collectives sont négociées sans arrêt de travail; et

« Attendu que des lois contre le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs existent au Québec depuis 1978 et en Colombie-Britannique depuis 1993, et les gouvernements successifs de ces deux provinces n'ont jamais abrogé ces lois; et

« Attendu que la loi contre le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs a réduit la longueur et la discorde des conflits du travail; et

« Attendu que le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs pendant une grève ou un lock-out compromet le tissu social d'une communauté à court et à long terme ainsi que le bien-être de ses résidents;

« Par conséquent, nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'adopter une loi interdisant le remplacement temporaire de travailleurs pendant une grève ou un lock-out. »

J'appuie cette pétition et je vais demander à page Tyler de l'amener aux greffiers.

### RURAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** A petition to save Duntroon Central Public School and all other rural schools in Clearview township.

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the framework of rural schools is different from urban schools and therefore deserves to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep rural schools open in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario."

I agree with this petition, and I will sign it.

### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that came to me from David Lundy, the regional vice-president of region 4 for OPSEU, in Merrickville, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lock-out; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Tyler to bring it to the Clerk.

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the province unexpectedly announced it is abandoning years of preparation, study and the signed Flow agreement that included a commitment to build the Highway 407 east extension in one phase to Highway 35/115; and

"Whereas the province, without consultation with the municipalities, and nowhere during the public process was phasing introduced, is now proceeding with a two-phased approach, stopping at Simcoe Street North in Oshawa; and

"Whereas this two-phased approach will mean significant financial, quality of life, safety and environmental setbacks for Durham region and its municipalities and hinder economic development, tourism and job creation for all of southern Ontario; and

"Whereas this two-phased approach will ultimately mean higher costs for all provincial taxpayers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We, the residents and businesses of southern Ontario, oppose any decision to terminate Highway 407 east in Oshawa or Clarington, and request that the province proceed with the 407 East extension project as planned and promised, in one phase, from Brock Road in Pickering through to Highway 35/115, with a completion date of 2013."

I affix my name in full support.

### CHRONIC CEREBROSPINAL VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from this lady in my riding. Her name is Rose Mary Thibeault and she lives in Cartier, Ontario, which is a tiny, weeny little village in my riding. It goes as follows:

"Whereas, even though health care institutions in Ontario have the equipment and expertise, those MS patients who have been diagnosed with blocked veins in their neck ... cannot receive the necessary treatment in Ontario; and

"Whereas many of the MS patients with CCSVI, at great personal expense, have had to seek treatment in other countries such as India, Poland, Bulgaria, Italy and the US, [and] the provincial government still has not authorized the procedure, which is angioplasty, an already approved procedure since the early 1980s; and

"Whereas not all people diagnosed with MS have been found to have CCSVI and not all people who have CCSVI will have been diagnosed with MS; CCSVI treatment should be authorized and treated on its own merits, regardless of any MS issues; and

"Whereas, [despite] numerous testimonials of exceptional post-treatment improvements in the quality of life for patients, accompanied by detailed presentations by vascular surgeons, to the Ontario government, Ontario still has not yet approved CCSVI treatment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Health, must immediately approve and fund all diagnosing and treatment of CCSVI by qualified Ontario health institutions."

I must say that her daughter has had to seek this treatment outside of Ontario.

### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition in support of Bill 100, paved shoulders on provincial highways. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

"Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

"Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance costs of repairs to highway surfaces; and

"Whereas" the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka's "private member's Bill 100 provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That" the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka's "private member's Bill 100, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process."

I support this petition.

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm reading a petition from my riding of Durham. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Ramp It Up!

"We, the residents and businesses of southern Ontario, oppose any decision to terminate Highway 407 East in Oshawa or Clarington and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to proceed with the Highway 407 East extension project as planned and promised, in one continuous phase, from Brock Road in Pickering through to Highway 35/115, with a completion date of 2013."

Get on with it. I'm signing in support of my constituents and presenting it to Brittany, one of the pages.

### ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ... recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care at its Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification; and

"Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed; and  
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"Whereas the Premier and Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution tabled at Queen's Park by Newmarket-Aurora MPP ... on June 1, 2010...."

I support this petition and will ask page Emily to bring it to the clerks.

### OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here signed by a great number of citizens of Ontario:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier government to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permit process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Minister of the Environment initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the Oak Ridges moraine until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to prevent contamination of the Oak Ridges moraine."

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition on their behalf.

### OPPOSITION DAY

### HYDRO CHARGES

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I move that, although in 2002 the residual stranded debt was \$7.8 billion, and since then

Ontario families have paid \$7.8 billion in debt retirement charges, and yet the McGuinty government will continue to charge the debt retirement charge on hydro bills;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls on the McGuinty government to instruct an external firm to conduct a forensic audit into the residual stranded debt and the debt retirement charge, and make the findings of the audit public.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Miller has moved opposition day number 1.

Leader of the official opposition.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** First let me commend my colleague, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka and our finance critic, for doing the right thing, bringing this motion forward so that Ontario families will know exactly what the McGuinty government has done with the \$7.8 billion collected to date for the debt retirement charge. Where did the money go?

Every hydro bill that Ontario families receive has something called a debt retirement charge on it. That debt retirement charge was brought in in 2002 with a clear goal: to pay down the \$7.8 billion in residual stranded debt. When that debt was paid off, it would come off Ontario families' hydro bills.

That \$7.8 billion goes back, as you know, Mr. Speaker, to some of the residual projects of the 1980s from the Peterson government, including cost overruns at Darlington. What it means for an average family: about \$84 a year. Now the McGuinty government has put the HST on top of that as well, taking in additional revenue. The goal was to have that paid off by 2012.

The government's own numbers say that, to date, \$7.8 billion have been collected. The residual stranded debt we paid off was \$7.8 billion. But without any kind of explanation, without any kind of warning, the McGuinty Liberals have announced that the debt retirement charge will stay on hydro bills for Ontario families until possibly as late as 2018, and they won't tell families what the balance is and they won't tell families what happened to the \$7.8 billion they already paid.

We asked the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., a government agency, to tell us the balance, but they also refused to tell the opposition how much is left. This makes no sense. It is demonstrably unfair to the Ontario families who pay the bills. It's like getting a credit card bill every month with an interest charge on it but no indication of how much principal is left to pay down. This is just plain wrong and shows absolutely no respect for the Ontario families who have been stuck paying this bill. What we fear is that Premier McGuinty's intention is to turn a temporary debt repayment charge into a permanent tax grab on Ontario families. We reject that absolutely. If the debt is paid down, it should come off Ontario families' hydro bills.

I know that my colleagues opposite, the same as my colleagues here with me today in the Ontario PC caucus, members who criss-crossed the province this January and continued to do so into February and March, talking to average families, are hearing that hydro bills are sky-

rocketing; they're going through the roof. Bills have gone up—the HST now on top of that, the debt retirement charge, hydro rates going up another 6% as announced recently, \$18 million in illegal interest charges from hydro utilities that are ripping off ratepayers. The McGuinty government is allowing it to go onto the backs of families who actually pay the bills. That is absolutely wrong, and they should stop that process.

What does this mean for the average family? Well, to date, rates have gone up for an average family by 75%—100% if you have a smart meter—and Premier McGuinty says they're going to go up another 46%, but we all know he's probably lowballing that figure.

Enough is enough. Families can't handle any more. It's time for change in our province.

This is what we're asking the members opposite to do, a very simple request: Show the proper respect to Ontario's hard-working families, to seniors, to small businesses, and conduct a forensic audit and tell us how much is left owing on the residual stranded debt, and tell Ontario families who pay the bills exactly where the money went.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Open the books.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It's a very simple, reasonable request. Open up the books, as my colleague from Simcoe—Grey says.

In November, you may recall, the Ontario PCs brought forward a very simple, very fair motion here in the assembly to have the balance of the residual stranded debt put on the hydro bills; to tell families on the bills, just like with their credit cards, how much is left to pay down. Sadly, the McGuinty Liberals voted down that very simple, straightforward and justified motion.

I have asked 19 times during question period for the McGuinty government to come clean on the debt retirement charge, and they still say no.

The Ontario PC caucus has travelled the province from Windsor to Rockland, from Kingston to Kincardine, and 32 other cities and towns in between, calling for a forensic audit of the residual stranded debt. It's the right thing to do. We're not going to let it go. Ontario families deserve to know.

Every day, families across this province ask some very simple questions. They want to know why the debt retirement charge is still on their hydro bills if they paid off the \$7.8 billion, and they want to know what the McGuinty government has done with all the money. If the DRC is almost paid off, why are they planning to put it on the bills until 2018? These are simple questions. They should be answered right away. They should be answered honestly and the facts put on the table for Ontario families to judge.

If the members opposite disagree with our assessment of the debt retirement charge, why don't you just open the books? Just show us honestly what the numbers are. Have the forensic auditors tell us where the money went and have the forensic auditors tell us how much is left to pay.

That's why the Ontario PCs brought this motion forward. It's the difference between what a PC government would do—open up the books and tell the truth to Ontario families—and a Liberal government that seems to want to keep this hidden from the public who are paying the bills. Just like when the billion dollars disappeared into eHealth with no audit, the McGuinty Liberals are refusing to be transparent; they're refusing to come clean with where that money went. An Ontario PC government will show Ontario families the respect they deserve by conducting a forensic audit into the residual stranded debt, and if that debt is paid down, we will provide Ontario families with the relief they need by taking the charge off the hydro bills. It's the right thing to do.

I urge members opposite to come clean and support this outstanding PC motion before the assembly today.

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**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** It's my pleasure to join in the debate here today. There's so much to say in response to what we just heard.

I think, in fairness to the people of Ontario, we should start with a couple of definitions. Specifically: What is stranded debt, and what is a debt retirement charge? We hear a lot of things being thrown around here, and blaming, so let's take a look at exactly what it is and where it comes from.

When, in 1999, the Conservatives destroyed Ontario Hydro in what was a failed privatization attempt, they left what we call a stranded debt. That was a stranded debt of about \$20 billion.

Let's take a look at what a stranded debt is.

**Interjection:** Educate us.

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** Yes, as an educator and a teacher. A stranded debt or an unfunded liability—here is the exact definition: It's the net deficiency of assets over liabilities from the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. financial statements.

First of all, the Harris-Hudak government tried to deregulate and privatize Ontario's energy system. Of course, at the time that led to sharp increases or rate hikes for ratepayers.

When that privatization attempt failed, they imposed a \$1-billion rate freeze on taxpayers. When you freeze rates, it just doesn't disappear; it goes somewhere. It went on to the backs of the people of Ontario.

At the same time, amid all of this chaos, the Progressive Conservative government at the time refused to invest in energy networks. The demand grew as generation fell, and Ontario's position became one where there was no investment in our electricity systems.

At the same time, the Harris-Hudak government removed the ability to file freedom-of-information requests through Hydro One.

I just heard the leader of the Conservative Party say that—

**Interjection:** Absolutely right.

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** Absolutely right? Wait till you hear what I'm telling you. The leader of the Progressive Conservative Party just said, "The Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. ... refused to tell the opposition how much is left." Well, here's a fresh idea: Go to the website; it's on the website. To say that this information is being withheld from them or that it's unavailable is not fair to the people of Ontario. This information is on the website. Anybody can go to it. They can take a look at this. For that leader to stand there and say that we should answer honestly—let's all be honest, then, and let's be clear that this information is available.

Let's take a look at this. The OEFC "inherited about \$38.1 billion in total debt and other liabilities from the former Ontario Hydro when the electricity sector was restructured on April 1, 1999." That was the Harris-Hudak government. "This amount included \$30.5 billion in total debt.

"The unfunded liability was \$14.8 billion as at March 31, 2010, a decrease of \$1.4 billion from March 31, 2009. This is the sixth consecutive annual decline in the unfunded liability....

"As at April 1, 1999, the present value of future payments-in-lieu of taxes and electricity sector dedicated income was estimated at \$13.1 billion....

"The act provides for the debt retirement charge ... to be paid by consumers until the residual stranded debt is retired. The debt repayment plan estimates residual stranded debt will likely be retired between 2015 and 2018."

It's right there. Let's remember that the Conservative government left this debt without a plan.

So, Speaker, I say to you that the McGuinty government has a plan. Unlike the previous government, we have a plan to reduce the unfunded liability, to permanently remove the debt retirement charge from all hydro bills by between 2015 and 2018.

How am I doing for time?

Through strong fiscal management, our government has steadily reduced the stranded debt by about \$6 billion since 2003. The Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. is projecting the debt to be paid down by at least an additional \$1 billion this coming year.

I think it's worth reiterating that that was rich, what we just heard. The people of Ontario deserve absolutely to have the facts, which are accessible, and they can get them themselves. If the Progressive Conservative Party is having trouble getting them, certainly they can go to the website.

I'd also like to give you a quote from Tim Hudak on October 20, 2010. This is certainly worth looking at in terms of his agreeing that the government of the day in 1999, a Progressive Conservative government, did fail in their attempts. He says, "I think we paid a price for our energy policy in the previous government. Because we went and made a 180-degree turn." In fact, it was the people of Ontario who paid the price, and it's the McGuinty government that has put us back on track, that is reducing the unfunded liability, that has a plan to make

this happen, that is doing it in a transparent fashion and making Ontario a better place for all people of Ontario to live.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I think the McGuinty government is really squirming on this one. They've been caught trying to extend a temporary tax by another six to eight years.

I brought in the DRC, the debt retirement charge, when I was Minister of Energy. Briefly, for the public out there, and obviously for honourable members who do not know what they are talking about, when we created the new Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One, the old Ontario Hydro had a \$38.1-billion debt, not created by Mike Harris, as we've heard across the way, but mostly created by David Peterson in decisions around Darlington. So it was \$38 billion when we came to office. We were technically bankrupt, and that's what "residual stranded debt" means. It means that after we set up the new companies, they each took a 60-40 debt-equity ratio, as is standard in the corporate world; we put them on a business footing, and when all the liabilities were put in, and payments in lieu of taxes, in a fairly complicated formula, what was left over that the new companies couldn't service on a commercial basis was \$7.8 billion, and the figure is indisputable.

Page 5 of the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. annual report, 2010, clearly says, "As at April 1, 1999"—that's when the companies got broken up and new companies created—"the present value of future PIL"—payments in lieu—"of taxes and electricity sector dedicated income was estimated at \$13.1 billion. Subtracting the \$13.1 billion from stranded debt of \$20.9 billion"—so after all the revenues were taken into account—"resulted in a difference of \$7.8 billion, known as residual stranded debt." Page 5 of your own annual report.

We looked at this and we got thinking, "Do you know what?" When we brought that in in May 2002, not 1999, the companies were set up. The act was done in 1998 in my name and the new companies were set up in 1999, but no consumer in the province of Ontario paid a penny of debt retirement charge until May 2002. The election was just a few months later in 2003. So to say we had four years of not paying debt and we collected \$1 billion a year is simply untrue and really not doing a service in terms of providing facts for the people of Ontario.

So, lo and behold, in this same report, you go a few pages later and it shows that as of December 2010, the consumers and ratepayers of the province of Ontario have paid \$7.8 billion. But on the same page it also says that Dalton McGuinty has requested that the authority keep collecting the tax for up to another six years, until 2018. You're trying to sneak in a tax and blame the Conservatives.

This should have been a good-news story, that our generation and our parents' generation paid off \$7.8 billion of old hydro debt. Instead, you've made a mess of it. You've thrown about five other debts in there. When we

were on the road, I went to 31 communities and my colleagues went to 88 on our debt retirement charge community tours, and people are mad when they find out they're paying \$84 a year, and they're going to pay it for many more years when they've already paid off the residual stranded debt.

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It's a shame. You're scamming the people of Ontario, and we're not going to let you get away with it. I'm—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Simcoe-Grey, do you notice that I'm standing?

You can sit down now; I tried to get you to sit down before.

I think we could use better language. There was one word in there that was a little outside the legislative language, and I'd like us all to be careful.

Further debate?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It's certainly a pleasure to enter into the debate on the motion brought forward by the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

I guess we're all concentrating on this assumption or assertion made by the member that the residual stranded debt was \$7.8 billion in 2002. From all the information I've been able to determine, from 1999 to 2003 the Harris-Eves government added to the stranded debt. It rose by \$1 billion over those four years, from \$19.4 billion to \$20.5 billion. Some sort of artificial reduction of that number by deducting some assets that clearly were never sold is not anything that makes any sense. The residual stranded debt was not \$7.8 billion. Our government was faced with \$20.5 billion in stranded debt and unfunded liabilities.

Since we're talking a little bit about the history here, we need to recognize what the situation was in 2003. Prior to that time, there had been no significant investments in new electricity supply and transmission infrastructure. The transmission infrastructure in this province was some 50 to 60 years old at that point. The previous government, the Harris-Eves government, had completely neglected its responsibilities to Ontario citizens during their eight years in office. There was no plan for conservation; no plan for supply to keep up with demand. Our reliance on coal almost doubled. It increased harmful emissions during that time by some 124%. Under their government, 25% of our electricity came from dirty coal. Our government is clearly committed to phasing out coal-fired generating plants, and we're on target to do so by 2014. As a physician, I can say that I'm just delighted with this move. It means that asthma rates, which are already coming down in this province in children, will be reduced significantly further.

There was also that infamous speculative venture of the previous government, an experiment in market deregulation in 2002, which saw spot market energy prices spike an average of some 30% over seven months. In fact, in retrospect, the then Premier of the day, Mr. Eves, did admit in an interview with the *Toronto Star* some one year later that in hindsight, the principle of competition

may have been a good one, but there was no competition in that market. It was a reckless disregard for the power needs of the people of Ontario. In fact, Premier McGuinty, the then Leader of the Opposition, on the second-to-last day that the House sat in June 2003—on Wednesday, June 25—had, in his question to Premier Eves, “Today we’ve had yet more confirmation, as if it were needed, that there exists a very real possibility of brownouts or blackouts this summer.”

How right he was. I think we all remember August 14, 2003. That was the time of the largest blackout in North America. It was 4:11 p.m. It took nine seconds for the grid to collapse. I remember it vividly because the fabulous riding association of Oak Ridges was having a golf tournament that day, and a barbecue. When the power went out, we just assumed it would come back on. It didn’t. We had many steaks to cook, but the incredible resourcefulness of my constituents meant that we went and got a couple of barbecues and cooked up the steak and had a great time. But there were many who suffered really severely during that particular blackout: 10 million people in Ontario suffered through that time. They lacked power. Some 200 industries had to shut down. Many people were stuck at the airport because flights were cancelled. It was all through their complete disregard of the situation, of power needs here in Ontario.

Obviously, we have a strong energy plan in contrast. I’m sure my colleagues will be elaborating further on how we have coped with rebuilding our system of electricity over the last seven years and how we plan to do so going forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O’Toole:** In the few minutes I have here, I just want to put a few things—first of all, we’re talking about different specific types of debt. One is the stranded debt, and the other is the residual stranded debt, so let’s be very clear. What Premier McGuinty and his Minister of Energy are trying to do is confuse the issue. To simplify this, our leader, Tim Hudak, is asking for a forensic audit.

Now, the Liberal speakers, respectfully, are reading the notes on a technical thing that were given to them. I would challenge any one of them—the previous speaker, Jim Wilson, was the minister and was there.

I have an audited document in front of me, notes on the financial statement, and I’m going to read them. It helps the listener today to understand. But more than this, it’s important that the consumers of Ontario are told the truth of what that seven cents on their bill is paying for. I took the time to look at my own bill. I have my own bill in front of me, and it shows on that bill from Veridian that the debt retirement charge is \$11.81 for that period, which our leader, Tim Hudak, said in his remarks is about \$100 a year per family.

As I said, in the documents I have, which are part of the public record—you can look at it—the first time that the debt retirement charge was collected, according to an audited document, we have collected about \$1 billion a

year, unlike what Mr. Duguid said, which is totally wrong. In 2002-03, the first year, it was \$889 million. In 2009-10, it’s about \$900 million to \$1 billion a year. Seven years later, we have collected, as has been said, \$7.8 billion.

Don’t be confused by all the numbers that the Liberals are using. They’re different debts, and there’s revenue attached to each one of those particular debts. It’s important only to the extent that most members, with all due respect, don’t work on this file very often. I have, and most of our caucus sees it’s very important, because it is really a tax that they’re extending.

I’m just going to finish off by saying that opening stranded debt, when the restructuring occurred, was \$20.9 billion. As of 1999, it was “was composed of \$38.1 billion in liabilities”—which is paying for nuclear plants and other capital—“from the former Ontario Hydro less the value of assets”—they still had value; they create revenue because they create energy or deliver energy—“including \$17.2 billion in notes.” These were accounts receivable that were owed. “After receipt of \$1.5 billion in loans receivable and other assets, the opening unfunded liability stood at \$19.4 billion. As at April 1, 1999, the present value of future” payments in lieu—this is taxes to municipality that utilities pay—“from stranded debt of \$20.9 billion resulted in a difference of”—here’s the important part—“\$7.8 billion, known as residual stranded debt.” That’s the debt that was not supported by assets.

I beg the Premier and his minister to look at the actual documents and try to understand. What our leader, Tim Hudak, and the previous Minister of Energy are calling for is an audited financial statement by a forensic accountant. That’s all we want. If you want to confuse people with the numbers, that’s deceptive. I think it’s not fair to this debate for the people of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

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**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Thank you for allowing me to stand up and speak and add some comments to the debate.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition speak, and I heard many others speak before me. I think it’s a very important topic. The people of Ontario want to know exactly what happened because so many households across the province question why we’re paying debt retirement charges. Sometimes when you get the bill, you see the cost of hydro, the delivery charges and the debt retirement charges, and the bill becomes huge. Some people have questioned why that happened and why we’re still paying until now.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, you’ve been here longer than me in this place and you have probably talked about it many different times. Your constituents and other constituents across the province of Ontario question why the debt retirement charges still apply. Everybody knows that when we got elected in 2003, we inherited more than \$20 billion in debt retirement charges, and the people of

Ontario have been paying since that time. If you look at the record, it's clear. If you go to the website, you know exactly how much has been paid: almost \$5.7 billion and also \$2.1 billion from the total charges being collected from the people of Ontario. So you know exactly where the money went.

But the most important thing is that before 2003, before we got elected to this place—everybody in the province of Ontario knows about the blackout which hit the province of Ontario. Everyone in the province of Ontario, the mainstream community and big business people, were hurt badly and lost a lot of money as a result of the blackout in the province of Ontario. The blackout came as a result of a lack of investment in transmission and transformers and hydro lines across the province of Ontario. There was no extra production of electricity in Ontario to feed and support growth in the province of Ontario. Since we got elected back then, we've tried to invest as much as we can to have sustainable hydro for companies that want to open in the province of Ontario, to attract more business and to keep the lights on.

It's also very important to tell the truth to the people of Ontario, and many people—especially with the philosophy of the Conservative Harris, Hudak and Ernie Eves government back then—"If we give the people of Ontario lower-priced hydro, we might attract more votes."

But the whole issue is that it's very important that when you have the cost price, delivery charges and debt retirement charges, if you have an artificial price at the top, the money's going to go down to the bottom, with the debt retirement charges—because if you lower the cost and not give the true cost at the top, they're going to accumulate and increase the debt.

That's what happened over the years until 2003. When we came to office, we told the people of Ontario that what you paid for hydro wasn't the true cost; it was an artificial cost. The artificial cost increases your debt retirement charges and, in the end, you pay it. So you pay at the top and you pay at the bottom. That's why the debt retirement charges increased over the years and we accumulated more than \$20 billion.

As I said at the beginning, the people of Ontario have paid since 2003 until now more than \$7.8 billion; \$5.7 billion went to pay off the debt and \$2.1 billion paid the interest plus the deregulation of prices. Artificial prices cost Ontarians more than \$1 billion. If you go to the website, you see it clearly. It's obvious. There's no doubt about it.

I believe that the most important thing to do, as people in government at the present time, is to tell the truth to the people of Ontario and tell them exactly how much it costs them per kilowatt, not just to ask them to pay an artificial price to gain a vote. You have to be honest and up front with people. If we go straight forward toward the future, the payment and the debt retirement charges will be paid by 2015 or 2018, and no one across the province of Ontario will be paying any extra.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, as you know and as many people of this province know, we are trying to

create a culture of conservation in the province of Ontario and also to create a culture of green energy, which is very important for all of us. It's important for our communities and important for our future generations.

The party opposite talks all the time about how bad it is that you want to create that culture; green energy's not good for Ontario, they said in the morning in question period. They said we'll lose jobs and that it's not good for the environment, not good for health care and not good for our health in the province of Ontario. I don't understand how they get this logic.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** It makes no sense.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** You're right. My colleague from Guelph said it doesn't make sense.

It's very important. We care about the people of Ontario. It's very important for all of us to understand the importance of green energy and also to pay the debt, because future generations shouldn't pay a penny.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to join with my colleagues today as we discuss the McGuinty government's plan to continue making hydro customers pay the debt retirement charge.

This charge, as we know, is used to pay off hydro debts going back as far as the 1980s. The last Liberal government ran massive overruns on nuclear power construction. Even though the debt was scheduled to be paid off by 2012, the current Liberal government wants to make people pay it for another six years. I suppose they need the money to pay the debts accumulated over the last few years of their mismanaged electricity system in Ontario. Hydro deals of today will place a huge burden of debt on our children and grandchildren for years to come. Since July 1 of last year, the government has also applied the HST to the debt retirement charge, making taxpayers pay an additional \$80 million per year.

Our party brought forward a motion last November to ask the McGuinty government to tell Ontario families how much of the stranded debt was left to pay, yet the government voted to keep that amount hidden. That's why we are asking for an independent auditing firm to conduct a forensic audit into the residual stranded debt and the debt retirement charge. We need the facts.

Why does the government need to keep the charge? Because this government's obsession with expensive green energy and their continual flip-flops on energy plans will cost us a fortune. I've seen their mismanagement in action in my own riding. In 2005, the government announced that an enhanced transmission line would serve my riding. Then, because they had announced they would cancel the coal plants by 2007, they needed new power sources, so they decided to build natural gas plants across Ontario, with one in northern York region beside the Holland Marsh. Then they looked at the plant they had proposed for Oakville and decided that it would put their Oakville MPP's seat at risk, so they cancelled it, a cancellation that could cost the government untold millions if they are sued for breaking the contract, but a real seat saver.

I guess my constituents should count themselves lucky our shores are not to be covered by windmills, destroying our tourism industry. We know what was done to Wolf Island by Kingston and we know how this government cancelled offshore windmills off Kingston and Scarborough—more seat savers. Or maybe they just suspended the windmills. Who knows? Seats may be unsaved.

So now we understand why they need to keep the debt retirement charge, because their complete mismanagement of our hydro system is going to cost us billions. Ontario taxpayers will probably be paying off the McGuinty government's hydro debts for the rest of our lives.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'm very pleased to join this debate, and I'm going to take a slightly different tack than what we've heard so far.

You know, the way I look at it is that you've had electricity in the province of Ontario for well over 100 years. It started with Sir Adam Beck back in 1900-and-something. I think it's fair to say that every government of every political stripe since then has perhaps, and I think rightly so, used very low electricity prices in Ontario in order to get the manufacturing, in order to get the businesses going in the province of Ontario—every government: Conservative, Liberal, and even the NDP government way back when. That was the Ontario Hydro policy for almost 100 years.

During that period of time, I think it's fair to say, the consumers out there, whether they were businesses or whether they were individuals, were never really paying the real cost of electricity, and that's how you ended up with an amount of over \$20 billion back in 2003—over \$20 billion in what we call the stranded liability or debt—because basically over 100 years we collectively as a society during that time, whether it was in industry, institutional or through our residential rates, weren't paying enough.

Some people will say that was good, because with low electricity prices we got a lot of manufacturing and a lot of businesses going in the province of Ontario that otherwise would not have provided the good-paying jobs on which this province was founded.

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So what did we start doing in 2003 when we formed government? I'm reading from a document here that says that since that period of time, we have paid off over \$7 billion of that stranded debt, because we took the position in 2003 that this debt, against which there is no asset base as such, had to be paid off. That's what people have been paying for the last eight years. We are actually \$7 billion better off in the stranded debt liability than we were in 2003.

The opposition can spin this any way they want. Sooner or later, this outstanding stranded debt has to be paid.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I know the member from Durham is bellyaching over there, but it has to be paid.

I think that the people of Ontario will understand that one of the reasons why we are such a strong province is that for over 100 years, up until 2003, we simply didn't pay on an ongoing basis the actual cost of what it takes to produce the electricity.

We're on the right road. It's going to take another number of years to pay off the other \$13 billion. Any other connotation or any other thing anybody wants to say on a very partisan basis is just plainly wrong.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's a real pleasure to join the debate here today on behalf of my PC caucus colleagues and, of course, our leader, Tim Hudak, in support of this motion.

For about the last 85 to 90 days, members of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus have been travelling across the province. We've been asking people, through our deep survey of 50 questions strong, what their views are in their communities and in our own communities. We've also been conveying where we've been going and where we plan to move this province when we form government. What comes up quite frequently is: Where are their tax dollars going? That is a primary concern for the people of Ontario.

One of the tours that many of us did was on the debt retirement charge, the DRC, and the residual stranded debt. That was \$7.8 billion; and in the last few years Ontario families have paid \$7.8 billion in debt retirement charges on that residual stranded debt. The McGuinty government is going to continue to charge this debt retirement charge on the hydro bills. What's worse is not only are they going to continue to charge Ontario families for this debt retirement charge, they're actually charging HST on the hydro bill and HST on top of this DRC. This government is going to take in millions upon millions more dollars in taxes from Ontario families who are trying to heat their homes. It's shameful. We're hearing that people can't afford this government anymore and that they don't believe their tax dollars are being spent wisely.

That's why, wisely, the Ontario PC caucus, under our leader, Tim Hudak, is calling for a forensic audit: to ensure that each and every single penny that is sent to this government for that debt retirement charge is going where it ought to be going. We believe it should have been paid for and paid down already—and the people of this province, particularly those on fixed incomes, would not have to continue to pay a bill that is unnecessary and should have been, by all accounts, erased at this point in time.

I don't have a lot of time here today, but I will say this. My constituents in Nepean—Carleton and the constituents right across the rest of the province have spoken up, and I'm going to read a few of the concerns that people are actually saying.

"Why do we pay their debt and retirement regulatory charges and the HST? Most of what we pay on our hydro

bills is completely unfair. Most people in this province are having troubles just making ends meet after working 12 hours a day, seven days a week, and these goons get paid four or five times as much, with our tax money, after getting”—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member from Nepean–Carleton, please; I got up a few minutes ago and I asked that we watch our language. The fact is that you can't say through something that someone else said something that you can't say in here. You just can't do that. So, please, keep some temperament.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thanks, Speaker. That was just a quote I was doing.

Here's a second one: "I am retired and with the combined increased prices in food, gas, fuel and hydro, I am finding it difficult to make ends meet and I would like you to explain to me your government's reason for this madness. The taxpayers of Ontario have had enough and you have taken us from being the most prosperous province in Canada to a have-not province and your leader, Dalton McGuinty, only smirks at the people of Ontario when confronted with this fact and you and your party care nothing for the devastation you have caused or put the citizens of this province through."

My final quote that comes in from folks, out of the many, because I am challenged with the time on the clock: "Headline today says that the government knew that the HST is going to cost us \$1,500 per household; \$1,500 per house, that is 5% of my disposable income. Seriously, 5% pay cut in a recession, are you kidding me? Additionally, the power is going up and so is gas, food prices are going up, and the city of Ottawa is talking rising taxes...."

The people in this province have had enough. They can't afford this government any more. They want to know: Where has their money gone? Some \$7.8 billion has been paid by them to pay off their debt. They have not shown us where it is. Let's have a forensic audit so that we can get on with business in this province and protect the taxpayers of this province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I'm pleased to stand up today and to debate. I, too, had the, for lack of a better term, travelling comedy show come through my riding talking about these numbers that have been adjusted. We're looking at, on April 1, 1999, a debt of \$19.4 billion; it increased by \$601 million in 2000. It went down by \$18 million in 2001; it went up by \$69 million in 2002, while money was being collected. I would love to see an audit of that time period, to be honest with you, to find out where that money went. But instead, this was part of the "let's sell off the assets of Ontario."

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** A fire sale.

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** Exactly. It was a fire sale. We sold off hydro. "Let's sell off the parts that make money; keep the debt, and we'll hide it and we'll put on it top of the people of Ontario."

You know, we went through the same thing with the 407. If we still owned it, the 407 would probably be built all the way to Ottawa by now. Instead, we're still struggling over that one.

I respect the fact that the Conservative Party, the party opposite, is questioning this number. They have looked at this with their own mathematicians, I suppose.

I just want to read a very brief—yesterday, the member from Peterborough asked the Minister of Finance a question about this exact issue. The Minister of Finance's response was the following:

"This failed restructuring created an unfunded liability of \$19.4 billion.

"And, to make matters worse, from 1999 to 2003, the PC government actually added to the unfunded liability by over \$1 billion.

"In order to pay down this debt, the PC government added a debt retirement charge to hydro bills as their attempt to try to clean up their mistake.

"Another thing the official opposition doesn't want your constituents to know is that the PC government set the DRC", the debt retirement charge, "at \$7.8 billion by overestimating the value of future contracts and revenues.

"The true debt that has to be paid down is the unfunded liability which was a whopping \$20.6 billion when we took over in government."

This was a quote from the Minister of Finance, yesterday.

With respect to this House, if they don't believe the numbers, why didn't any of the members opposite challenge the veracity of the minister's statement?

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**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm certainly pleased to rise in support of the motion that has been introduced by my colleague the member for Muskoka.

First of all, what we're debating here today, of course, is the motion put forward by the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka which calls on this government "to instruct an external firm to conduct a forensic audit into the residual stranded debt and the debt retirement charge, and make the findings of the audit public."

I think it's important to know that the Electricity Act of 1998 states that, "The Minister of Finance shall determine the stranded debt and shall from time to time determine the residual stranded debt in accordance with the regulations." In this House, we all know that the minister has never lived up to that obligation because the Minister of Finance has never determined, as it says in the Electricity Act of 1998, the amount of the residual stranded debt, apart from the original estimation of \$7.8 billion at the time of restructuring. We are certainly supported by the Electricity Act in the motion we have in front of the House today, and also we now know that the Minister of Finance has never lived up to that obligation. I would hope, combined with the terms of the act and with the motion that we've brought forward today, that this government would actually do the right thing and

recognize that the people in the province of Ontario are entitled to know what happened.

The debt was \$7.8 billion in 2002. We all know that that was to be paid off as of 2012, and this government has now come to a decision that it appears this is going to be a debt that's going to be forced on the taxpayers in this province until 2018. In fact, many people fear that this is going to become a permanent charge.

I hope you will realize that the taxpayers in this province simply can't take any more. They've seen unprecedented increases in their hydro rates. This is just one more area that I can tell you angers them greatly, and they find it very offensive that the government is not being honest with them as they experience hardship and difficulties.

I ask you today: Be honest with Ontarians. Allow for the forensic audit of the debt retirement charge to take place. Ontarians deserve to know where the money has gone, why they're being forced to pay several millions more than had originally been anticipated, and why this government is wilfully concealing what it has done with the money.

The people of Ontario deserve better than a government that is unaccountable and secretive with the money that the taxpayers have given them. I call on the government today to immediately launch a forensic audit into the debt retirement charge fiasco. Come clean. The taxpayers deserve the truth.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I'm delighted to be able to speak for two minutes on that issue.

I want to tell you that I did have some comedians down in my area, too. They went to all the places—but at least if they were to tell the truth to all the constituents.

When we talk about the debt, way back in 2003, the debt from the hydro was \$19.5 billion. Over a year, it came up to \$20.5 billion. Why? Because they collected that seven tenths of a cent per kilowatt hour and they didn't transfer that money to the proper budget.

I have to tell you that ever since the McGuinty government got elected, we've saved the taxpayers over a period of six years—six years in a row—\$408 million a year in interest. We've saved \$408 million in interest.

The member for Nepean—Carleton was saying that the people will be paying \$19,000 more in their electricity. Do you know how much that means in purchasing electricity? It would mean they would use over \$19,000 worth of electricity in the year. It is impossible.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Impossible.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Impossible. It would come to an average of about \$1,550 per month for their hydro bill. Again, trying to mislead the people of this province: I will not accept that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words on this motion. I've been sitting here for about an hour and a half, listening to the debate so far. Let me say there's a fair bit of fog on both

sides of what I've heard so far and there's a fair bit of trying to rewrite history. In fact, I have to remark that I have heard several government spokespersons get up, and each one seems to use a different figure. If Liberals can't agree amongst themselves on what the figure is, boy, I think that illustrates just how thick the fog is on this particular issue.

But there is some history to this, and I think people need to know the history. The fact is, the former Conservative government in 1999 decided that they were going to take apart Ontario Hydro, and they began a process of trying to privatize Ontario's hydro system.

I will give them credit for one thing: They were open about it. They said what they were going to do, and they started to do that. I think they were absolutely mistaken in trying to do that, but I will give them credit: They were open about it. What we've seen from the present McGuinty government is further privatization of the hydro system through the back door while they deny that they're privatizing the hydro system.

However that all may be, the decision to take Ontario Hydro apart and, in effect, to create six different organizations—Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One, the electricity standards authority, the Independent Electricity System Operator, and the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., also then coupled with the Ontario Energy Board—has created a large monster in Ontario.

Most other provinces—Quebec and Manitoba, for example—have only two entities running their hydro system. In Manitoba, you have Manitoba Hydro, a publicly owned, not-for-profit company; and you have the regulator, the Manitoba Public Utilities Board. It's nice and neat, only two entities; not a lot of money wasted on executive salaries, the kind of executive salaries we see in Ontario today. Quebec, very similar: Hydro Quebec and the regulator. It's nice and neat; people can see where their money is going.

That's part of the problem in Ontario today. You have a seven-headed electricity monster in the province because the Liberals have added the Ontario Power Authority, with all of the contracts they sign in the backroom. People can't believe what's happening to their hydro bills and they deserve an explanation. Unfortunately, this debate today is only going to provide a small amount of that explanation.

When the former Conservative government broke up Ontario Hydro, created Ontario Power Generation and said, "You must run as if you're a profit-driven, private corporation," that meant that some of the debt that had been guaranteed by the government in the past, when Ontario Hydro had run not as a profit-driven corporation, but as a service corporation, to the benefit of the people of Ontario—some of that debt that had been guaranteed by the government had to be put elsewhere. So the concept of unfunded liability associated with electricity generation was transferred to this new entity called the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., and it was handed over as stranded debt or unfunded liability. The total of that at the time was \$19.4 billion, in 1999.

Now, where did that come from? The reality is most of that unfunded liability, or stranded debt, resulted from nuclear plants that were built in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, and virtually every one of them went way over budget. It doesn't matter if you're talking Pickering A, Pickering B, Bruce or Darlington; they all went over budget in terms of their cost of construction.

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The people of Ontario were told, first by a Conservative government in 1984, that Darlington would only cost about \$4 billion. When it was completed under the Peterson Liberal government, the cost had gone to over \$14 billion—an \$11-billion cost overrun. That is where three quarters of the so-called stranded debt comes from, from nuclear plants that people were told, “This is only going to cost a couple of billion,” and then the price comes in at \$5 billion, or people were told it's only going to cost \$4 billion, and it comes in at over \$14 billion. That's where three quarters of the \$19.4 billion of stranded debt comes from.

There have been some funny things happen since then. Some funny things have happened since then. The reality is that even after Ontario Hydro was broken up, the actual cost of operating the nuclear plants and paying the debt of the nuclear power plants still wasn't being accounted for. So in fact, Ontario actually started to see the debt increase.

Ontario's electricity consumers and taxpayers are required to pay off this stranded debt because all of its borrowings, as I said, were originally guaranteed by the government of Ontario. As a consequence, the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., or the OEFC, actually collects revenues from a number of sources to pay down this debt. There's the debt retirement charge of 0.7 cents per kilowatt hour that's levied on the electricity bill. All of the provincial income taxes from OPG, Hydro One and Ontario's municipal electricity utilities—for example, Toronto Hydro or, in the case of my hometown, the Fort Frances Power Corp.—go to the stranded debt. All of the dividend payments from OPG and Hydro One to their sole shareholder, the government Ontario, are supposed to go to that stranded debt.

Have some games been played with the stranded debt? Yes, some games have been played. After the former Conservative government started down the road of privatization, some not-very-nice things happened. One of the not-very-nice things that happened was that people's hydro bills exploded. So Ernie Eves, then a newly minted Premier, on November 11, 2002, because hydro bills were skyrocketing and people were getting angry, decided to freeze the wholesale price of electricity at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. How was he going to pay for that freeze? The freeze was paid for by adding it on the stranded debt. In fact, another \$918 million was added to the stranded debt in 2003 and 2004 through that attempt to, shall we say, cover up the true cost of electricity in our electricity system.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Kenora-Rainy River, please, the words that you

used—“cover up”—are unparliamentary. I'd like you to tone your language down.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** But it's true.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I don't need any help from the member for Durham either.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Let me use the word “hide,” then, Speaker, because that's what was going on here. I don't use the words “cover up” in a nasty sense. There's an attempt here to hide where the money was going.

On April 1, the price freeze was eliminated. As a result, the stranded debt in 2010 was 24% lower than its opening value in 1999, but there's still an outstanding balance of close to \$15 billion.

I think what bothers people is this: Between April 1, 1999, and March 31, 2010, Ontario electricity consumers and taxpayers have made annual payments totalling \$19.6 billion to service and pay down the stranded debt. In other words, the total debt payments made by Ontario consumers and taxpayers since 1999 have now exceeded the original value of the stranded debt, which was \$19.433 billion, and yet we still owe \$14.81 billion. I think that is what is bothering people, and it rightfully should bother people.

How does that happen? Well, part of it happens because there is something called interest payments. Unfortunately, interest payments through the period since 1999 and interest rates have not always been kind, so you end up still having to pay more.

I wish I could say that's the end of it, but it's not, because the current McGuinty Liberal government now wants to engage in another spending spree on nuclear power plants. We've already watched the shell game. We've heard different ministers of energy come out and say, “Oh, this will only cost maybe \$10 billion or \$15 billion,” but as soon as you go to somebody on the outside who knows something about the construction costs of nuclear power plants, they tell you that nuclear power plants that are being built today in Finland are way over cost, billions of dollars over cost. When you look at what's happening with the Point Lepreau nuclear plant in New Brunswick and its refurbishment, it's over cost. When you look at what's happening today with the Bruce nuclear power plant and its refurbishment, it's way over cost.

So independent analysts will tell you that the McGuinty Liberals are about to go down the same road again and load up on the stranded debt, because nuclear power plants—we're already seeing this, and we see it in the United States too—for whatever reason inevitably seem to be much more expensive than people are originally told. Are the Liberals now playing games with this? Yes, they are, and the Liberals are about to engage in a process that is going to stick people with even more stranded debt because they are not giving a realistic, honest assessment of what it will cost to build new nuclear stations or even some of the refurbishments that are happening now.

I just want to add one other piece to this. The Conservatives, in 2002, put a price freeze on electricity. Now that we're headed into an election, what did the

McGuinty Liberals do just a few months ago? They said, "We're going to give you a 10% reduction on the hydro bill." But where is the money for that going to come from? That's going to be money that's borrowed too. So while Liberals point fingers at the Conservatives, the Liberals are going to do virtually the same thing the Conservatives did back in 2002: try to buy people's votes before the election and then tell them after the election, "Oh gee, there's over \$1 billion of debt here that we didn't tell you about."

Shame on both their houses. Shame on the Conservatives for not admitting that their whole experiment with endorsing the Enron privatization of our electricity system back in 1999 blew up in their faces and is still costing us money, and shame on the McGuinty Liberals for preparing to go down the same path in terms of nuclear plants that are going to cost a lot more money than they're telling the public, and shame on the McGuinty Liberals for trying to hide their debt on the hydro bill until after the election, just as the Conservatives did in 2002.

This whole process that we've seen—first the Conservatives, now the Liberals—has left people with hydro bills that are skyrocketing through the roof. People living on limited incomes or fixed incomes are having a heck of a time paying the hydro bill—many can't. We've seen plant after plant, paper mill after paper mill across the north close because they couldn't afford to pay the escalating cost of electricity. We've seen Cliffs Natural Resources, which wants to mine the Ring of Fire, release a press statement saying they'd like to build a smelter, but Ontario's hydro rates are too high right now to consider a smelter in Ontario.

1720

This has been one fiasco after another. I'll tell you, I think in the coming election, people are going to hold both the McGuinty Liberals and the Conservatives accountable for a system—the Conservatives opened privatization; the Liberals, what I call backdoor privatization. People are going to hold them both accountable for a fiasco that's been unbelievably expensive, has killed tens of thousands of good jobs and is going to cost people even more money in the future.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** The reason we have this motion here before us is because the opposition does not want to talk about the fact that they have this love affair with dirty coal; anything to distract us from what they really want to do, which is just burn more coal, because coal is dirty but it's cheap. The reason we've been using it is because it's cheap.

Here's what I find quite interesting, as the first certified financial planner elected to this House, and it's very simply this: We have the Auditor General and the Auditor General is independent; he is an officer of this Legislature. Any member of our House, if they have a concern about the numbers, can write the Auditor General and say, "Auditor General, will you please look into this? There seems to be some dispute. Was the

amount \$7.8 billion? Was it \$20 billion? Was it \$19 billion, and then it went up?" We have the Auditor General, so why would they not just ask the Auditor General to come in? Why do we need to have another Auditor General? Why do we need to have somebody else? Because the Auditor General has already decided for us what the facts are. They're just trying to conveniently find somebody else to validate their position.

If you really are concerned about this, you would ask the Auditor General, but I think you're afraid of what his answer would be.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm not sure what debate the Minister of the Environment was participating in. We're talking about the residual stranded debt.

In the limited time I have, I want to just get on the record an email from a constituent. It's reflective of many and it speaks to the issue today.

"Norm

"I am interested to know the status of the former Ontario Hydro debt. I have been paying the debt retirement charges on my hydro bill for years and have absolutely no understanding of where the current paid-down debt stands.

"As a budget-conscious individual, I do not usually make payments like a monkey, just because someone says I have to. I need to know what I am paying and how my payments affect the bottom line. It appears that the DRC will continue well into my grandchildren's lifetime.

"Can you tell me the current level of debt to be paid down and how much of the debt has been paid? A pointer to the right website to monitor the debt payment progress would be wonderful."

That's illustrative of what we're talking about today. The Electricity Act, 1998, states very clearly, "The Minister of Finance shall determine the stranded debt and shall from time to time determine the residual stranded debt in accordance with the regulations."

The Minister of Finance has never determined the amount of the residual stranded debt apart from the original estimation of \$7.8 billion at the time of restructuring. We heard from the member from Simcoe-Grey, who was the Minister of Energy, how that was, through an external firm, determined to be \$7.8 billion.

Today's opposition day motion highlights just another case of poor accounting by the McGuinty government of taxpayer money. The annual report from the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. debt management section clearly states that as of April 1, 1999, the residual stranded debt was \$7.8 billion. As the former minister pointed out—the member from Simcoe-Grey—the actual payments from the people in Ontario started in May 2002, unlike what the finance minister said in question period today.

In 2010 alone the McGuinty government collected \$907 million in debt retirement charges, so to date we know that \$7.8 billion has been collected in debt retirement charge revenues. But nowhere in any annual report is there a line item that shows Ontarians where the

current residual stranded debt stands at today. To me, that seems to be some pretty basic accounting. When people get their credit card statement and they're paying down their debt, there's a line that shows what they owe. There's another line that shows what they paid and there's a line to show the interest on the balance.

Finally, there's a line that shows clearly what the current balance is, and that's the one that we seem to be missing. Certainly there have been some interest charges, but interest rates have been quite low in recent years.

Ontarians have a right to know what the amount is. It shouldn't be a mystery. It shouldn't be a secret. Instead of treating Ontario's energy users as some bottomless ATM for goodness-knows-what energy experiment, it's time to come clean on what the debt retirement balance is today. If Premier McGuinty and his finance minister won't, then it's high time to have an external firm take a close look at what has been happening to the hundreds of millions of dollars collected each year from Ontario family households and have a forensic audit so we will all know where it stands.

Ontario families deserve that respect. They deserve to know, of the \$7.8 billion that has been collected, how much is left owing. That's the least they can ask for from this government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I have to say that my colleague the member from Kenora-Rainy River covered this ground pretty well, so I will take the opportunity to speak about lessons that should have been learned from history and seem to be ignored.

I can tell you that this government is hurtling headlong towards massive investments in nuclear power that will produce the same kind of unpayable, unmanageable debt that the last headlong rush to invest in nuclear power generated.

In 2008, Mr. Gerry Phillips was Minister of Energy. The Toronto Star wrote a very interesting article entitled, "Ontario Aiming to Lead 'Nuclear Renaissance.'" At that time, Energy Minister Phillips talked about the new investment at Darlington as part of a \$26-billion investment in nuclear—\$26 billion in 2008. The long-term energy plan from November last year said "\$33 billion," so, in two years, a 20% rise in the cost estimates for nuclear power—10% a year. If this trend line continues in any way to follow historical trend lines, we're not talking about \$33 billion; we're talking more like \$80 billion or \$90 billion, costs that would leave those power plants producing power at a cost that would not be marketable in Ontario.

It's the same problem that we faced before. Plants were built, they produced power, and that power did not pay the capital cost of those investments. So this province is stuck with tens of billions in debt which it is paying off at the rate of \$1.8 billion or \$2 billion a year, but, as has been said and is quite correct, interest continues to mount. So one is constantly fighting against this headwind of interest costs. In other words, there is an unmanageable debt.

This government has ignored the history of the last 40 years in Ontario, ignored the burden, the impact of this kind of debt on households, families and people who try to make their businesses work and companies that try to make major investments. They ignore the fact that the dead weight of \$15 billion in debt for unproductive assets is one that undermines our economy. This government, blind to what has happened before, continues to make decisions that put our future and our livelihood on the line.

There's no question in my mind that the efforts to privatize the hydro system that were undertaken by the Harris-Eves government were a disaster. We were lucky that what happened in California, with the total disruption of their economy when companies like Enron had substantial control of their electricity system, didn't happen here. We were simply lucky. What we have, however, is a slow-motion version of that disruption, with prices rising not because this government is devoted to jobs, not because this government is devoted to the environment, but because this government is devoted to making sure that some people, some companies, become spectacularly wealthy out of our electricity system. That has consequences for all of us. Look at the Ontario Electricity Finance Corp., the debt we're carrying, the money that comes off your hydro bill in a way that's recognizable in the debt retirement charge and the amount that's buried in the larger hydro bill that is simply part of a payment that's also made to the government, mirroring that nuclear debt retirement charge.

1730

I actually am going to vote for this resolution by the Conservatives not because I think it's a particularly good resolution, but because I think it provides an opportunity to keep the nuclear debt in the limelight. It keeps the nuclear debt visible, because every time we talk about that debt you go back to where it came from, and that debt, this whole province has to understand, comes from unsustainable, foolish decisions to make investments that can't pay for themselves, investments that undermine our economy on a day-to-day basis.

Look at the cost of the Darlington new build. I was here when the discussions went around about the \$6 billion cost to build the new reactors. I was here the day George Smitherman had to announce that the plans had been put on hold because the price that had come in, the only one in a bid that had addressed the concerns of the government, was too high. The government has never revealed the price. The only number that we have is the one that's been published in the Toronto Star at \$26 billion.

I have to say, for a price that would contain any cost overruns, probably \$26 billion addresses a big chunk of that. But when I look at Bruce nuclear and the fact that it is dealing with big overruns and recently renegotiated its agreement with the government so that an extra \$50 million or \$60 million is paid to them to help them deal with their financial problems, I don't even think their fixed price of \$26 billion reflects the full cost of what we would be stuck with if they went ahead with that project.

This motion may in fact do little else but give everyone who is opposed to nuclear power an opportunity, on a regular basis, to point out the folly of going down that route, to point out the real cost of nuclear power, something ignored by this government: The cost of waste management, the cost of decommissioning, the cost of that stranded debt is never factored into the cost of nuclear power—never. If in fact that was factored in, we would be talking about the cost of that power at 15 or 20 cents a kilowatt hour. If we were talking about what a real investment would put as a burden on the people of this province, then we would be talking 15 to 20 cents a kilowatt hour, not the—what can I say?—fun-with-numbers figures that are currently being presented. A government that in two years increases the cost estimate for nuclear power from \$26 billion to \$33 billion is in no position to tell anyone that it is dealing with our electricity system in a responsible way.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Let's get down to the real, hard facts of this particular resolution.

The resolution says that the residual stranded debt in 2002 was \$7.8 billion. Do you know who disagrees with that resolution? Let me quote to you from the 2010 annual report of the Auditor General of Ontario.

The Auditor General of Ontario, in a section entitled "Update on the Province's Stranded Debt," pegs the stranded debt as of April 1, 1999, at—wait for it—\$19.4 billion. Not \$7.8 billion, but \$19.4 billion. Says the Auditor General, and again, I quote, "Initially, little progress was made in reducing the stranded debt."

So that means that by the time our government took office, the stranded debt had gone in fiscal years in this way: \$19.4 billion, \$20 billion, \$20 billion, \$20.1 billion, \$20.2 billion, and finally \$20.6 billion when we took government. Says the Auditor General, "However, over the last few years, it has been steadily decreasing."

Now, sometimes people will ask, "What did we do before we had a stranded debt?" And the best way to find out is to look at Hydro-Québec or Manitoba Hydro. How do they finance the construction of their assets? They do the same thing that the old Ontario Hydro did: They issue bonds, and those Ontario Hydro bonds used to be great financial vehicles. Now, in the dark rooms late at night, perhaps through the haze of cigar smoke, as the former government was contemplating carving up the old Ontario Hydro, the purchaser said, "Well, listen, we want to buy the assets, but we sure don't want those liabilities. What are you going to do with the liabilities?" They said, "Well, it's not a problem. We'll just stick it to the taxpayer," which is what they did—\$20.8-billion worth.

So instead of being able to issue bonds as the old Ontario Hydro did, the two new entities, Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation, were thus unencumbered by this taxpayer debt that was just sort of left on your electric bill and mine. That's how we came to pay it.

The Auditor General—and I'm going to again use the official auditor of the province of Ontario—shows how

the debt has gone down. I'm going to quote in billions: \$20.6 billion, \$20.4 billion, \$19.3 billion, \$18.3 billion, \$17.2 billion, \$16.2 billion and \$14.8 billion. This is the current year.

If you accept the veracity of the resolution brought forth here, the party opposite, the Progressive Conservative Party, has not merely incorrectly stated the amount of the stranded debt; they've cast aspersions on the integrity of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario. Personally, I think I'm going to side with the auditor on this one.

By the time the former Conservative government wanted to actually sell the generation and transmission assets of the old Ontario Hydro, the worldwide experience in private energy was the type that we saw in Enron and WorldCom, where people just took the money and ran. What they did is just stick the taxpayers of their countries with debt after debt after debt. So in addition to sticking the Ontario taxpayer with the worst of all possible worlds, in the end, they didn't even privatize it.

So now, what our government inherited was a situation which, after all of the Conservative tinkering, we had to fix. That's why the stranded debt has come down year after year after year. That's why our power generation assets have been improving year after year after year.

By the time they finished in government, Ontario was losing, not gaining, the ability to generate and transmit electricity. What were we doing in 2003? We were relying on expensive imports of US electricity. We were burning dirty coal. Our cities had to have backup generators. This was disgraceful. Our power grid now is stable, it's modern, and it's getting better.

I have to conclude here with something people should watch for. This is the secret Conservative energy plan. It has four points in it:

- (1) Blame somebody else.
- (2) Take your generation and transmission assets and run them into the ground; just do nothing.
- (3) Burn dirty coal.
- (4) Buy expensive US power on the spot market.

The best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour. That's what they did in the past, that's what they're going to try and sell Ontarians on in the future, and that's why, this fall, Ontario is going to have its third straight Liberal majority government, for a solid and stable power grid here in the province of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Miller, Parry Sound-Muskoka, has moved opposition day number 1. Is it the pleasure of House that the motion carry?

All of those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1741 to 1751.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
Hudak, Tim

MacLeod, Lisa  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Miller, Norm  
Munro, Julia  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.

Savoline, Joyce  
Tabuns, Peter  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth

Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Craiton, Kim  
Delaney, Bob  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad

Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Mangat, Amrit  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.

Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Monique  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Brownell, Jim

Duncan, Dwight  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoy, Pat  
Jaczek, Helena  
Johnson, Rick

Oraziotti, David  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Ruprecht, Tony

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 16; the nays are 43.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negatived.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** This House is adjourned until 9 of the clock, Thursday, March 3.

*The House adjourned at 1753.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, P.C., Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
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<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
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Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
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Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
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Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
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<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
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Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
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Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown  
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Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
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No. 89

N° 89

ISSN 1180-2987

# Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

# Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 3 March 2011

Jeudi 3 mars 2011

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 March 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 mars 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Islamic prayer.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 2, 2011, on the motion for allocation of time of Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission / Projet de loi 150, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail à la Commission de transport de Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't sure at this point who was supposed to be up, but if it is me—I see I have 10 minutes.

I spoke on the last occasion about the TTC workers, about taking away the right to strike, about arbitration, about the costs to the city of Toronto and also the cost to the unionized workers, who will, from this point on, although they're likely to get more money through arbitration, find many of the key aspects of their job that were negotiated in the past will not be negotiated in the same kind of way. Most of the breakthrough legislation around things, most importantly like health and safety, have not been arbitral awards, because an arbitrator is there to try to make sure that fairness is done in terms of wages, but they do not often rock the boat when it comes to new concepts, new ideas or new rights for workers. Those are hard won, and usually only through conciliation with the right to strike. So it was a sad day when the government imposed this closure.

I've been around here for nearly 10 years, and in those 10 years I've seen a lot of closure motions. I know why governments do them. Governments do them for a variety of reasons, but fundamentally they do them, first of all, because they're tired of the debate and they don't want to hear any more debate on the issue, or they think they're getting beaten up in the debate and they simply want it to go away. The second reason they do it, on occasion, is because there is a timetable; there is an agenda that has to be met. In this particular case, I happen to think it's both of them. I think the government is starting to get beaten up by many people and groups

who have served them in the past. I think some of the unions are starting to get pretty angry, looking at this.

I know that this Liberal government is feeding towards that Ford frenzy in Toronto; I know that. I think they're afraid of the Ford nation. I listened to that last night, this whole thing about the Ford nation coming down on the Liberal government and on McGuinty if the government doesn't do exactly his bidding. I don't know whether people over there are afraid of that; I don't know. I think they probably are. I think they're afraid of a whole bunch of things around this new administration and what they're asking for. I think, too, this is a government that very often just does things by polls. They look at the polls—and my friend here from Brantford, the instant expert on Toronto, says, "Oh, wow, we read a poll that 70% of the people want to take away the rights." So that makes him an expert on Toronto. I think that's why the government is doing it, too.

I think this government is going to be beaten up over time on this issue—perhaps not today and perhaps not by the people of Toronto, but they are going to be beaten up by many of the people they like to stand here and say they represent and listen to. Because in fact this is not happening at all. Part of their whole rush here is that they don't want to hear the other parts of the arguments; they don't want to hear what—I think ordinary, rational people, given time to think about it, maybe would have second thoughts. So, "Let's go headlong and do whatever Mayor Ford says. Let's do whatever the media has trumped up. Let's take away these rights. Let's do it in a hurry and let's do it now."

That brings me to the second half of why they're doing it: They have an arbitrary deadline; they've set it for themselves. They've decided, "We have to do this before the contract that the TTC workers have is up." They have to do it right away because on April 1 they'll be without a contract. Heaven knows what they're going to do.

This government didn't listen at all to what the union has said. The union is asking merely—they know the cards are probably already dealt. They know that the betting is taking place. They know that their hand is probably not the winning one. And they know that something is going to happen. But they also know that their membership wants an opportunity to be heard. They also know that in order for things to happen or for them to be listened to, they have to take away the right to strike, at least in this round of negotiation. They put forward, I think, a very sensible proposition to this government which was totally ignored. They said, "In this round of bargaining we will not strike. We will not."

Please take your time and do this right. Whatever you're going to do, listen to all the parties involved and please do it right. This government isn't interested in that. This government invoked closure even though the debate was almost wound down; it was almost gone. All of the New Democratic Party members, who obviously were not going to support the bill, had already spoken. I don't know what you thought was going to happen. But you were so bound and determined to meet that artificial deadline that you've set for yourselves that you invoked closure on something that didn't have to have closure at all.

So here we go: In a few minutes we're going to be all finished and the government's going to do what they want. There's going to be a day or two of hearings and they're going to be really done quickly. And then, some time before that magic April 1 date, the government will be back in this House with another closure motion shutting it down. Third reading will be half an hour or an hour. Whatever the debate's going to be, it will be almost non-existent; the government's going to do it.

Then I can see the Premier waving this around, inviting Mayor Ford, "Come on up to Queen's Park. Have I got a treat for you. Please don't unleash the Ford nation on me. I've done exactly what you said. I've bowed to your every wish. Not only have I bowed to your wish for subways when obviously Transit City makes much more sense; I have now bowed to your wish on the TTC. What else can I do, Mayor Ford? How else can I help you so that you don't unleash your nation upon me? How about letting you sell off all the Ontario Housing, Toronto city housing to the highest bidder. Can I do that for you, Mayor Ford? Please, can I do that for you?" Or how about, I don't know, the hundred things that he's asking for.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** He wants \$150 million.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Oh yeah, he wants \$150 million. "Please, Mayor Ford, wait for the budget. We'll see whether we can come up with that money."

I don't know; for all these years I thought the Ontario government stood for something. For all these years, I thought they stood for the people of the province of Ontario and, yes, for the people who live in Ontario's and Canada's largest city. But I see that much of what is done around here is done for political expediency. Much of what is done around here is so that this government can find itself, it hopes, on the right side of votes come election day.

0910

There are, of course, going to be winners: those who want to change our society enormously; those who want us to go down the path of becoming Wisconsin. And then there are going to be losers: those workers, like the TTC workers, who are going to lose the rights they have and, I think, the rights they want for a safer and more decent place to work. This government is playing right into those hands and is doing it, I think, because there is a real, palpable fear out there of what the residents of Toronto are going to do with this government in the next

election. They are bowing to pressures they ought not to bow to. They are giving up on friends, or people who used to be their friends, in order to embrace people who are very strange bedfellows indeed.

In the minute or so I have left, I just say this is another sad day in this Legislature. I think that almost every time there has been a closure motion in the 10 years I have been here, we have spoken against closure because it is not in the democratic interests of the people we serve. To cut off debate when debate becomes uncomfortable, to cut off debate when you have a secret agenda or an agenda that obviously makes no sense, like this one, is a sad day for democracy. For all those Liberals who cheer on closure motions because, I guess, they're just tired of it, well, I think they will have other options come October 7 this year. They won't have to listen to it anymore, because so many of them will not be here.

You know, that's the way it is, and I guess it's with a very heavy heart that I watch this take place. But I know full well that in the fullness of time, whether it takes a week or a month or a year, people and saner things will prevail, ideas will come back and those workers who are being done such a disservice here in Toronto will have their day too, perhaps all thanks to the Ford nation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? Further debate?

Seeing none, on March 2, Ms. Smith moved government notice of motion 54. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will defer this vote until deferred votes, after question period.

*Vote deferred.*

## HEALTH PROTECTION AND PROMOTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

## LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION ET LA PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 1, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 141, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act / Projet de loi 141, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? Further debate?

Seeing none, on December 8, 2010, Ms. Matthews moved second reading of Bill 141, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Amendment Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will defer this vote until deferred votes, after question period.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

# STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT, 2011

## LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT DES COLLECTIVITÉS FORTES GRÂCE AU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 22, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2011, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 140, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement, abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la réforme du logement social et apportant des modifications corrélatives et autres à d'autres lois.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's a pleasure for me to have just a few moments to speak about Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2011, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts. I only had a couple of minutes to speak to it on one of the hits during second reading debate, and I really wanted to put a few comments on the record this morning as it relates to my riding of Leeds–Grenville.

Our riding has had a lot of debate with housing over the last little bit, through the united counties of Leeds and Grenville. Most of our existing units are over 50 years old, and 30% of them—30%—were built before 1946. We've got a tremendously old housing stock, one that is in desperate need of repair, and the county has had very, very poor luck in getting funding from the McGuinty government. They're very frustrated. I know that many of the county councillors have expressed dismay, both the ones who were elected last October and the county council prior to that. They've made a number of funding requests. I believe in their last funding request they asked for in excess of 200 units, and basically, I think the first time they got nothing and the second time they received a handful.

There were two actual projects that the united counties of Leeds and Grenville did as part of their master plan. They looked at a number of applications that were in throughout the entire riding and they prioritized two projects: one in North Grenville that was on the site of the Kemptville District Hospital, and the other in downtown Brockville, from a corporation called Wall Street Village. Two very good projects that, when the ranking was finished, were equal—dead equal—in terms of points. The county opted not to prioritize them because they didn't want to choose between the two. Both were very significant projects that required a lot of funding from the province, and as a result, they didn't get the money.

I can remember, because the anniversary of my election is tomorrow, that one of the first things that I did when I got here—I got sworn in on March 22. We convened a meeting with the people from the Kemptville District Hospital; the CEO, Colin Goodfellow; and a representative from the Ministry of Housing, because we realized then that the initial Canada-Ontario affordable housing agreement—sometimes units get turned back. Sometimes, for whatever reason, the funding allocation doesn't get used and the numbers come back to the ministry.

We were trying to develop a strategy on being ready in case units became available, but we couldn't get much assistance from the government. That's why I feel so strongly about Bill 140 and the efforts that they're putting on local service managers—in my case, the united counties of Leeds and Grenville. Obviously during question period you don't have that opportunity to get detail, so I opted to use the tools that were available to me and I filed some order paper questions, very specific questions to help us develop our strategy in Leeds–Grenville to deal with the government.

I'll just indulge the members, because I think it's very pertinent to Bill 140's discussion. Some of the order paper questions I did—I asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs to “provide the name of municipality and dollar allocation and number of units for the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program round 2 funding initial allocation.” And just again, indulge me, because once I read the five and tell you the answer it'll become clear.

The second question: I asked the minister to “provide details of the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program round 2 funding initial allocation projects that have received an extension on their commitment.” I wanted to find out who had been given that extension.

Thirdly: the funding details for round 2 funding to give me an idea of funding reallocation for projects in round 2 that could not proceed; to provide reallocation details of round 1 funding; and finally, to provide the name of municipality and the dollar allocation and number of units for that initial round 1.

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All I wanted to do was to find out, basically, the background; to provide the county with a strategy on how to proceed for these two top-ranked affordable housing projects; to find out what happened in round 1 and what happened in round 2. Very specific questions, very open questions; there weren't any curveballs there and there wasn't any trick that I was trying to play with the ministry. I was just trying to find cold, hard facts so that we could deal with our aging affordable housing stock in my riding and be able to tell some very progressive people who wanted to provide that housing mix how to proceed.

Here is the answer that I got to those very specific questions, and this is from Minister Bartolucci, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. His response: “On June 9, 2009, our government signed an affordable housing agreement with the federal government to deliver new housing to Ontarians. Through this agreement

we are investing \$622 million and the federal government is matching the sum, for a combined total of \$1.2 billion for housing. This investment will create 4,500 new units of affordable housing and repair well over 50,000 units of social housing across the province. We are working with federal and municipal partners to announce these projects in the near future."

Can you imagine what looks I got when I showed this response to those two housing groups? They couldn't believe it. They couldn't believe that the province of Ontario would answer an MPP's questions—specific questions for them to develop a strategy on trying to get funding, trying to be open, trying to work with the government to make this work, and they get this from the minister? It's disgraceful. It's a joke. These people have worked for years to provide this in good faith, based on this federal-provincial partnership. When I told them about the minister's statement about his Bill 140 and when I sent them, through the county, details, I was just again—I think it was one of the members for the third party, the member for Parkdale–High Park, who, when she had her 10-minute address, talked about the fact that the clock is ticking on this term of the Legislative Assembly. We all know that we have an election in October, and I think if we're going to do something on this file, we need to have a little co-operation.

When I table some order paper questions, the thing that frustrates me the most is the fact that when I get bonehead answers, like I got to those very specific questions, there's no area of appeal. There's no late show I can call. There's no appeal board that I can go to to get those questions answered. Those are the answers I get and that's it.

But I'll tell you, when it comes to this file, when it comes to our housing stock in our riding of Leeds–Grenville, we need some help and we need some co-operation. We don't need a pat, two-paragraph answer that tells me something that I already know. That doesn't help county council. That doesn't help those community groups that want to provide a project to deal with the affordable housing need in my riding of Leeds–Grenville. Again, 30% of the stock was built prior to 1946. Applying for units and getting no response, trying to develop a strategy to deal with the government, and getting stupid answers to some very specific questions, isn't going to foster that co-operation.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Calling them stupid is?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Well, they are. They're stupid answers.

All I remember is, we've got a strategy. We've already, in our community, done what was part of this bill, and that's providing priorities, but we need some help.

So, in closing, I appreciated the fact that I asked for a couple of minutes today just to, again, express the frustration of our county members, of our service provider and of those two projects, one in North Grenville and one in Brockville, who find it extremely difficult when they don't know how some of these projects were funded; when they know that there are units that are returned that

could be put to use in other communities. How are they going to mount a message that's going to get a response from this government?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for letting me provide a few local examples.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was very interesting to listen to the member from Leeds–Grenville as he shared some of the struggles that people in his riding are facing when it comes to affordable housing. Those are struggles that could be repeated, I would say, in most of the ridings across this province.

The bill does take a few good steps, but it is mainly what is not in the bill that is causing all of us problems. The need for affordable housing is present across every community in Ontario, and I will speak in more depth about my own communities and how the lack of affordable housing is causing some real hardship for a lot of people, a lot of families and entire communities. Yet we don't see any of this in the bill, so there continues to be this huge need out there with no real plan to bring solutions to meet those needs. The member from Leeds–Grenville gave us examples of this.

This is a typical bill where there are some really good, small steps that will clear up some of the paperwork issues that have been a nightmare for a long time; they will probably get addressed with this bill. But the fundamental right of people to affordable housing is not being addressed, although during the huge consultation that was done on poverty, it came up as the number one issue throughout the province, that affordable housing had to be addressed. In every forum that you go to, you hear about affordable housing, yet we will let this opportunity go by with nothing done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm pleased to respond to the comments from the member opposite on Bill 140 and to lend my support to the bill, which, if passed, will provide Ontarians with access to a system that puts people first and will set a strong foundation for a more efficient, accessible system for those who need it.

I think we need to put this in the context that, since 2003, our government has invested more than \$2.5 billion in non-profit housing, in addition to the \$430 million which is provided annually for other forms of housing supports.

One of the things that I'm really excited about right now in my community is the St. Joseph's foundation, adjacent to St. Joe's hospital, is building affordable housing units for seniors. This is going to be a great development because a lot of the day programming for seniors is located at St. Joe's, so they'll have affordable housing next door to where the programming is.

The legislation, though, will also provide some flexibility in the way that program money is used as it arrives from the province. That means that people in Toronto can use it in one way, people in Leeds–Grenville can use it in

another, and people in Nickel Belt or Timmins can use it in another way—whatever makes the most sense locally.

A couple of things that people in my community are very pleased about in the bill are that rent geared to income will now be a once-a-year calculation, not a continuous recalculation, and also the requirement to have municipalities allow one-off affordable units in single-family residential—good things in this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the speech by the member from Leeds–Grenville on Bill 140, the Housing Services Act, 2011.

I think the member made some good points. In particular, he was talking for a while there about order paper questions that were coming on the issue of affordable housing from community groups in his riding trying to get some very specific information that he was going to pass on to these groups and how the response from the government to his specific questions was not very helpful. I would simply say that seems to be what this government is doing.

For those who aren't familiar, as MPPs we can table questions, which we give to the table here in the Legislature, and then there's a time frame whereby the appropriate minister has to respond to the question. But if they're going to give answers that don't really provide any information, it's really not very helpful.

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Last year I held an affordable housing roundtable, a consultation meeting, in Parry Sound. In my riding, Parry Sound has probably the greatest need for affordable housing. We had many individuals and groups who came out to participate in that. I have since then passed on their thoughts and recommendations to the government, so I hope the government is listening to the input they're getting.

This bill is a small step. Our party will be supporting the bill, I think, as debate winds down. But it would be nice if the government would take opposition order paper questions seriously and actually make some sort of attempt to provide information which can then be passed on to our constituents.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened again to the member from Leeds–Grenville.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Yes, I was going to say that he didn't use his BlackBerry, and he spoke so eloquently without it.

He said something that I think every member in this House ought to listen to, particularly those who are not in cabinet. He talked about the frustration that he has, and I'm sure all non-cabinet members have, in trying to get answers, answers to very simple—sometimes not so simple and technical—questions, ones that are not politically motivated, simply trying to find out things about their

community, about government programs; and then getting back no answers or, as he put it, bonehead answers to very simple, very straightforward, very non-political questions.

He quite rightly pointed out that there is no help. There's nothing that you can do when you get an answer, or a non-answer, like he gets. There is no appeal, and as he said, there's not even a late show. There's nothing that can be done.

Now, we in this House, particularly on the opposition side, know that when you ask a question in question period of a minister or of the Premier, they're often not going to answer it. They're going to skirt around the issue and say whatever they want, but they're not going to directly deal with the issue that you are bringing forward. I was at a reception last night and met a Liberal staffer and talked about that, and she was very blunt and very bold. She said, "We never intend to answer your questions. Don't you know that yet after 10 years?" I said, "Well, yes, I do." But it was the first time I'd ever heard someone from the Liberal Party actually explain it that way.

Please, when he's asking a non-technical question, please find it in your hearts to answer them. We all have a job to do here: to represent our constituents.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Leeds–Grenville has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the members for Nickel Belt, Guelph, Parry Sound–Muskoka and Beaches–East York for their questions and comments,

And I apologize: I was a bit over the top today. I was blowing off some steam a bit, but there was a lot of frustration. As I said before, in my riding, in our communities, the local service provider has over 1,130 units that they own or fund, in addition to 113 rent supplements. The two projects that were requested, the 80-unit seniors' building in Kemptville and the 80-unit building for disabled persons in Brockville—again, there was some frustration. We had received no money one year; we were asking for \$29 million. We ended up, of the 323 units that we asked for, getting 14. We got 12 units in Elgin and a two-unit in Kemptville. So you have to appreciate that we're extremely frustrated.

I saw some figures a year ago, just after my election, and our waiting list in housing fluctuates between 350 and 600. That's significant, when you look at 600 people as a high on the waiting list when there's only 1,130 units that the county is involved in. Again, we were trying to develop a strategy, we were trying to develop a partnership, but we needed the base information from the government. We needed that information so that we could provide a strategy back to them so we could participate.

Time is running out on this session of the Legislative Assembly, and when you put a bill like this, I think you have to be prepared to provide not just the normal fluff answers like the ones I received to my order paper questions. I think people deserve better.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Mr. Speaker, we would like the debate to continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Is there further debate? The honourable member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I'd like to start by quoting from a book, *Persistent Poverty: Voices from the Margins*, which basically says that in Ontario, right here, right now, 1.3 million households are precariously housed; that is, they pay more than 30% of their total income on housing—1.3 million households. That's a lot of people.

There are 120,000 families that live in overcrowded housing. If any of you ever care to come to northern Ontario and go into any of our First Nations communities, you will see what overcrowding is all about and you will see what sleeping in shifts is all about.

We also have 80,000 Ontarians who live in sub-standard housing that requires major repair. We're not talking about changing the colour of the porch here. We're talking about windows and doors and a roof that doesn't leak and mould in the bathroom etc.

We have over 140,000 households that are on waiting lists for affordable housing. That's worth repeating: 140,000 households are on affordable housing wait-lists in Ontario. That's throughout Ontario. It doesn't matter where you go, there are wait-lists for supportive housing. This number increased from 2009 to 2010. It increased by 10%.

Housing insecurity is rising partly because the cost of energy keeps soaring and people can't make ends meet. Rent has also increased faster than inflation, while the income of tenants has stagnated or declined. Half of tenants do not have enough income to pay for housing and other necessities such as food, medicine, transportation or education.

The author of *Persistent Poverty* spoke to hundreds of people from across Ontario struggling with poverty and insecure housing. I'll give you one example. His name is Jacob. He's a young man from Toronto who said at a recent community meeting, "A bachelor apartment costs \$600 or maybe \$700 a month in Parkdale. Rooming houses are terrible. People steal your food, mess up the bathroom, get drunk and bring their friends home. My socks and underwear were stolen from the laundry. How do I pay a high rent on my ODSP cheque of \$1,092 per month? It could be worse if I were on OW at \$585 a month. What am I supposed to do? Am I supposed to steal?" Those are some of the comments that we've heard.

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There's a real need for action on affordable housing, yet we see a bill that takes a few tiny steps that are wel-

comed by all but that miss the whole picture. How can we be bringing forward a bill that deals squarely with supportive housing and miss the most important issue of them all: the fact that we need more affordable housing, or we need a way to support people so they don't need affordable housing and can pay their own rent? But this is completely missing from the bill. We're talking about an issue that is really pertinent, right here, right now, to millions of people in Ontario, yet we're missing the boat.

We're not talking to them about what's most important to those 140,000 households on waiting lists: They want affordable housing. Those people who can barely pay their rent and their utility costs want help with decent pay and decent jobs so that they can pay their own rent and they don't need supportive housing. But we're not seeing any of that in the bill. We're seeing a few small good steps, but we're missing the elephant in the room. How can we do this?

Not so long ago, three and a half years ago, I was the executive director of the community health centre in Sudbury, and we ran a program. We were the lead agency for the Homelessness Network, which dealt with homeless people in Sudbury. We worked under a strategy called *Housing First*. That is, the people we dealt with, the great majority, from month to month—depending; between 85% and 90% of them—dealt with severe mental illness and addiction. They were people who were chronically homeless. They had developed coping abilities that made them really, really hard to house, and without a stock of supportive housing it became almost impossible to help them. Because you know what? If you want to do anything that would help people cope with their mental health and addiction issues, the first thing you have to do is house them, because when you don't know where you're going to sleep tonight it becomes all-consuming. All of your time, energy, effort and resources are going to be focused on this, never mind trying to get a hold of your addiction issue or starting on a path of recovery for your mental health issue. You need housing.

But in Sudbury, the wait-lists are just as long as everywhere else. Over 10,000—actually 12,000—people in Sudbury are waiting for supportive housing. Sudbury is not a big community, but it sure has a big wait-list for supportive housing. You add into this mix close to 450 people with severe mental health and addictions issues who are difficult to house, and you have a desperate situation for a lot of people.

I remember way back, maybe eight or nine years ago, we had a nurse at the community health centre—her name is Lorraine LeBlanc—who started to talk about homelessness in Sudbury and said that there were people sleeping outside. When I brought that forward to a forum of other health care providers, they all had a good laugh. It was January. It was minus 35 outside and I was talking about people sleeping outside. Well, she started going to what we call the soup kitchen. They had a little porch attached to the soup kitchen at the time. The place was not heated, so she froze in the winter, and there were lots of bugs in the summer, but she toughed it out and kept

going and kept saying, "There are people sleeping outside. It's minus 30. We have to do something."

The social planning council stepped in. They did a study and showed that between 350 and 500 people are homeless in Sudbury on any given night. It was minus 29 in Sudbury last night. I guarantee you there were people sleeping in the cemetery and there were people sleeping underneath the bridges, at minus 29. They don't do this by choice. They do this because there is a lack of affordable housing, and on the little money they get on OW or on ODSP, they have lost their housing. They have been kicked out and they're out at minus 25.

How could that be? This is Ontario. We're not talking about some Third World country, where—but are we? We're talking about a community in northern Ontario, like many other communities, where between 350 and 500 people are homeless. They sleep in the cemetery, they sleep under the bridge and in the entranceways of the banks, wherever they can find, because we have this elephant in the room called, "We need more supported housing," or "We need a way to lift people out of poverty so that they can afford housing." Here's a government that brings this bill that talks about some technicalities that we all agree need to be fixed but leaves that huge gap out there that leaves people homeless.

I and many of the colleagues in this room spent close to 18 months on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. We heard from 33 different communities, and 335 deputants came and told us their stories. Every single time we sat, in every single community we went to, we heard about the need for supported housing, the need for affordable housing. We saw the compounding effect it has on people who are trying to deal with mental health and addiction issues when they don't have access to housing. We wrote a report that was supported by all parties in this House. It was a cry for action on mental health and addiction with a specific recommendation targeted at affordable housing, because we know the links are there.

Yet we have a government right now that is putting forward a bill that talks about the right issues—it talks about supportive housing—but it takes the wrong path. It takes a few little steps that are good, but it doesn't address the core of the issue, which is, how do we make sure that access to safe and secure housing is considered a human right? Why don't we recognize that the lack of affordable housing in Ontario is an assault on the human rights of our citizens? When we see 350 to 500 people in Sudbury being homeless or near homeless, when we see people sleeping outside at minus 29 degrees—and it goes way colder than this in Sudbury and in all of northern Ontario—there's something drastically wrong. If this is not a call to action, what is a call to action then?

But there's no movement from the government. There's no clear plan that says, "Here's the number of new units that will be built each and every year. Here's how we will make sure that we follow through and that those new units are being built. Here's how we make sure that people with mental health and addiction or other

disabilities have enough to be able to afford the rent and also to buy food, clothing, a little bit of transportation and other necessities of life." But there's no movement. What an opportunity lost.

We also have in Sudbury what is called an ALC, alternate level of care, crisis. Our hospital, a brand new state-of-the-art hospital on one site—something that we have been waiting for, hmm, 16 years—finally came to be. The grand opening was done last spring, and we have the new Sudbury Regional Hospital. We should all be happy. We have state-of-the-art equipment throughout. The place is functional, it's well designed, it has top-notch staff. Yet they are bogged down with long waiting lists in the emergency room, cancelled surgeries, and the list goes on. Why? Well, partly because of affordable housing, partly because we have elderly people who run into trouble in their own homes who are admitted into the hospital and then they can't go back home. They sit in a hospital bed because there's nowhere else for them to go.

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We need affordable and supported housing in Sudbury. We have a task force put into place, headed by Dr. Zelan, and everybody agrees that we need more supported housing in Sudbury. We presently have—it's on the hospital website; anybody can go and see—200 people at the Sudbury Regional Hospital who are there awaiting proper care someplace else but there is nowhere to go, so those 200 people stay at the hospital causing the hospital many, many difficulties trying to operate as an acute care hospital.

There are only 300-some beds at Sudbury Regional Hospital. Take 200 of them and give them to people who don't need to be there and you can see how the problem will develop quite quickly. Well, they are dealing with challenges and they are having many, many difficulties. The solutions have been put out to the community care access centre, to the local health integration network, to the Ministry of Health, to the Ministry of Housing, but yet there's no action. I mean, the Minister of Housing is also the MPP from Sudbury. He knows what's going on in his own city. He knows the recommendation that everybody agrees to: That we need more supported and affordable housing. Yet there's no action.

There are groups. Tullio, from Capreol—a very charming town in the northeast end of my riding—has on the books an almost shovel-ready project for affordable and supported housing for Capreol within Capreol co-op housing. They have the track record; they have the banking ready; they know how to do housing. This is what they are. They are a housing co-op and they certainly have the support of our community. How come we cannot move forward? How come we're not able to get support from the government to move those units, to get them built, to get them filled? Because the wait-list certainly is there.

Here we are talking about a subject that is of great interest to hundreds of thousands of Ontarians, yet I feel like we're kind of paying lip service to this. We are doing little, wee changes that everybody will agree with, that

will make some of the paperwork of existing tenants a little bit easier, and we support this; there's nothing wrong with that. But we're missing the elephant in the room. We're missing the plan that will say, "We have a plan to make things better. We have a plan that shows that we listen to everybody who lives in poverty. We listened to the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions and their recommendation for people who are trying to deal. We listened to the Social Planning Council of Sudbury, who says housing first is the way to go; housing first is the strategy that should be followed. We listened to the leaders of the Sudbury health community, Dr. Zelan and his group from the local health integration network that looks at how we solve the ALC crisis that is causing so much difficulty for Sudbury Regional Hospital."

The solutions are clear and they all point in the same direction: We need affordable housing in Sudbury; we need supported housing in Sudbury. I know that it is the same in every other community. Yet we're talking about this subject but we're not going to do anything that addresses the major issues facing housing in Ontario: the fact that 1.3 million people are precariously housed and the fact that the wait-list stands at 140,000 for all of Ontario. We're not going to do anything about this. This is a real shame. It is more than an opportunity lost; it is almost cruel. How can it be that in my Ontario, right here, right now, such a basic human right, the right for housing—remember Maslow's hierarchy of needs? We're not talking about self-actualization here. We're talking about your basic needs: food and shelter. We are all human. We all have those basic needs for food and shelter. Otherwise, nothing else can happen. You cannot grow to your full potential. You cannot be a fully contributing member of our society. Hell, you can barely participate in society if you don't have your basic needs addressed.

And we have this bill, Bill 140—what a really good name if you ask me—the Strong Communities through Affordable Housing Act. Now, doesn't that lead you to believe that we're going to address the housing crisis in Ontario, with a name like that? It sure led me to believe. I was happy when the title was unveiled. Then the happiness quickly faded away when I read the bill and realized that we are tinkering with some little issues that are important and that will make things a little bit better, but we're not addressing the main issue.

The main issue is those 1.3 million people previously housed, 120,000 families in overcrowded housing, 80,000 families in housing that—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased to rise and respond to the member from Nickel Belt. I can certainly understand that there's a challenge facing us when 17,000 units were cancelled by the previous government. Of course we are in catch-up.

Having said that, we have invested \$2.5 billion into housing in this province since 2003. In particular, \$1.2

billion has gone into housing in terms of repairs and new units with our stimulus package.

But interestingly enough, while the member stands and waxes eloquent about this need, they voted against the package. They voted against new units, jobs and repairs for exactly the same people that they're concerned about, and the reason they voted against it was it was considered crumbs: \$1.2 billion was considered crumbs.

The other thing that we need to speak about is this homelessness issue. We've invested \$157 million to help combat homelessness just in 2009-10. That's an increase of 30% since 2003. We've spent more than \$89 million in provincial funding for emergency hostel services offered by municipalities, just in 2009-10. We've actually increased domicile hostel housing by 33% since 2003. In 2010-11, we're investing \$31.5 million to the consolidated homelessness prevention program, over \$35 million—again—for the domicile hostels and over \$2 million emergency funds, so add that to the \$1.2 billion with the federal government. In 2008-09, again, we put in \$32.6 million. The money is coming. We are working toward—we've got a strategy.

We know we need to work with the service managers. We know we need to find a less complicated way for them to be able to do their jobs. We sat and worked with them. They have helped us put together what we believe will be that long-term strategy for moving forward.

Obviously, the commitment is there on behalf of our government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to the member from Nickel Belt, as I always do. She brings a perspective that is unique to this place: She comes from a mining community that has boom-and-bust cycles and she has many First Nations people who live in and around her riding.

She talked about the human face of Sudbury. She talked about a woman who lived in the soup kitchen's unheated porch at 30 and 40 below zero for a winter and is happy that she has even that, because that woman knows that there are people sleeping under bridges and in the cemetery and who have worse conditions to live in than she does. The member has, eloquently and with some great passion and compassion, talked about the people of her riding and the people of Ontario.

I do have to say I was taken aback a little by the member from Etobicoke, who commented on this. She said that the NDP and this particular member had voted against a budget. Yes, we did. We vote against all budgets that don't do what they're supposed to do for the people of this province.

We also voted against a government that, in 2003, promised to build 20,000 units of affordable housing in its first three years in office and, eight years later, has yet to deliver 11,000. Eight years later, they haven't even met the commitment for the first three years. They're only halfway, eight years later.

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Did we vote against the budget? Sure we did. Did we do so for malicious reasons? No, we did it for the people who are on the waiting list, the people who are sleeping in the soup kitchens and the cemeteries and under bridges—something that this government does not care a whole lot about.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments? The honourable member from—Chatham—Kent—Essex?

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** Correct, Speaker. I do propose that we change that to Chatham—Kent—Leamington someday, but we'll wait and see if that actually happens; I'm hopeful that it would. It would certainly make the people of Leamington very happy, including their mayor and council.

But to the points that are contained in Bill 140, if this was passed by the Legislature here, it would give Ontarians access to a system that puts people first. That's what we're hearing this morning from speakers: that we do recognize the people who are seeking long-term and affordable housing here in Ontario. That's what this bill would aim to do; it would put people first. It will also set a strong foundation for a more effective, accessible system for those who need it.

My colleague from Etobicoke Centre, Ms. Cansfield, mentioned a great number of figures in her remarks. I have a few as well, because this legislation builds upon the more than \$2.5 billion the McGuinty government has invested in non-profit housing since 2003—a very sizable investment, indeed—and the more than \$430 million our government has provided in housing and homelessness supports annually, also an important figure to recognize.

This legislation, if passed, will give municipalities the flexibility they have requested so that they can better allocate resources to meet local needs. We recognize that the needs of the GTA and Ottawa, for example, and the Far North—Timmins, another example—are not the same as what might be needed and required in Chatham—Kent—Leamington.

I support this bill, and I look forward to the debate and the actual vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

Seeing none, the honourable member from Nickel Belt has two minutes for her response.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'd like to make a comment in response to the member from Etobicoke Centre. She referred to the NDP voting against some of the investments that were coming for affordable housing. The problem with those investments is that they were bundled up in a budget that also included a \$2-billion giveaway to the richest corporations in Ontario. How, coming from Sudbury, can I ever do this? I have forestry companies all over my riding that are barely hanging on. They're not paying any taxes; they're not making any profits. They are barely staying alive. How is a \$2-billion tax cut to profitable corporations ever going to help the people of Nickel Belt? It escapes me completely. I don't see how

more profits for the banks and more profits for the insurance companies are going to help the people in Nickel Belt. I can't vote for this. It makes no sense whatsoever.

The member from Chatham—Kent—Essex and the member from Etobicoke Centre quoted a lot of numbers and, in and of itself, the investment looks impressive. But just to put those figures into a little bit of a comparison, Ontario spends \$64 per capita on affordable housing. We are the lowest in Canada, with the average being at \$115 per person of government investment into affordable housing. If we compare ourselves to Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan spends four times as much as we do here in Ontario. The numbers are not that impressive anymore, are they?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I realize my time will soon run out, probably in about five minutes, but I'll come back and say some more on the next date.

This is a huge issue in and around the city of Toronto, a place where I have lived almost my entire life. With the exception of one year in Ottawa and, a subsequent time, six months or so in Ottawa, I have always lived in this city.

I have seen poverty in all of its aspects, in many parts of the city, many communities, many neighbourhoods, many new Canadian groups, many First Nations. But in particular, I want to talk about my own riding of Beaches—East York.

People often ask me, "The Beach: Isn't that a rich place? Aren't the homes expensive there?" They sometimes marvel that a place like the Beach would vote consistently for NDP members in this Legislature. I have to inform them that, yes, although there are some very expensive and very nice homes in the Beach and in parts of East York, there are also ongoing pockets of poverty in many of our communities.

I'd like to talk about those places, like Crescent Town, Barrington and Lumsden. I'd like to talk about some of the rooming houses along Gerrard Street, Main Street and places where people don't have enough. Those are the communities that want and need a government to take action on housing and poverty issues. Those are the communities that, more often than not, are disappointed at the lack of government action affecting them and their daily lives.

Crescent Town in particular is a large high-rise development. It's a very large place. Some 10,000 or 11,000 people are crammed into six or seven major buildings. If you go through the halls of those buildings, you can hear any number of languages being spoken. You have new Canadians literally coming from all over the earth to live there.

They live there because the rents are cheap. They live there in spite of the fact that many of the homes have cockroaches, bedbugs and mice. They live there in spite of the fact that the elevators going up 20 and 30 floors often break down. They live there in spite of the fact that

the buildings are not in the kind of repair that you and I would deem to be acceptable.

They're not alone. There are other apartments, other buildings and other places where people live, where they too find themselves in poverty. They find themselves in overcrowded conditions. They are overcrowded because, with rents so high in Toronto, they often have to have more than one family living in an apartment unit, a house or a place that was not designed to accommodate that many people.

You go in and you see the consequences of that. It does cause the buildings to deteriorate at a faster rate. It does cause boilers that were designed to produce the hot water for a limited number of families not to be able to produce the hot water that is necessary when you have double or triple the number of people living in the buildings than they were designed to house. You see the result of the overcrowding with children not having sufficient opportunities or being in portables all around Crescent Town school. You see that. You see that in Thorncliffe, which isn't in my riding but is part of the former borough of East York. You see it in many, many places in this city.

These people all have one common need: They want to have more decent housing for themselves, for their families and particularly for their children. If they are new Canadians, they came here hoping for a better life, if not for themselves, then at least for their children. Living in overcrowded conditions, often in poverty, often without adequate employment: They find that to happen too often.

Housing is a fundamental right, I believe, of Canadians. Particularly because we live in such a cold and northern climate, we need to be adequately housed. It's not good enough to say that someone can have some kind of substandard housing. We are not living in a tropical place. We are living where the extremes of cold are going to have a terrible effect on the human condition. We need to have that kind of accommodation here, and the housing needs to be built.

We also, as a government, as a Legislature, should be fundamentally aware and, I suggest, ashamed of the fact that the waiting lists for housing continue to grow. As more and more people came to Ontario, particularly through immigration but also net migration from the other provinces over the last 20 years, the housing did not keep up with it.

1010

I am mindful. I was a mayor on that very sad occasion in 1995 when the government of Ontario changed and the new government came in and cancelled all of the building projects that were being undertaken at that time to build decent and affordable housing in Ontario, and particularly in East York. I remember going to places that had been earmarked for extra monies, places that were about to become co-operatives because the apartment buildings had been bought from landlords who didn't, frankly, give a damn. They were being bought; they were about to be changed; they were about to be turned into

good and decent housing, and all the money was yanked away; all of it was gone. Only those projects that were almost completed were allowed to continue, and the housing that we saw in our municipality evaporated. The opportunity for the families that were living in East York evaporated on that date.

I do remember, with some chagrin, going out as the mayor in the weeks and months and years that followed, as those places were completed because they were too far along to have been cancelled by the incoming government, and seeing the smiling faces of Conservatives and Conservative cabinet ministers shaking hands on the development of these projects. It was bizarre; it was absolutely bizarre to me. When a Liberal stands up and says, "This is what was inherited"—yes, it was inherited. But eight years after the Liberals formed government—eight years—what do we have? We have housing costs that have skyrocketed and we have literally no affordable units that have been built. Those that were stopped have not been resurrected. Those community and social and church groups that want to do something have not been given the opportunity. The 20,000 units that were promised in the first three years of a McGuinty government have never been built. Eight years after they took office, only 11,000 units have been built in all of Ontario. That is a pretty sad record by any standard at all.

The Housing Network of Ontario declaration has been endorsed by Habitat for Humanity, the Social Planning Network of Ontario, the Wellesley Institute and 450 other community and housing groups, and what they say we need is absolutely basic to what has to be done. They suggest, first, that we need bold targets and sustained funding, including a minimum of 10,000 affordable housing units a year. For us to build that many housing units in a year, we would have to be as bold and as brave as the province of Saskatchewan. That's what we would have to do. Instead of being last per capita, we would have to be tied for first. I think that's realistic and we should aim for it. If Saskatchewan can do it, surely Ontario can do it as well.

They suggest, secondly, that we have to have a clear measurement of progress, including specific targets and timelines for reducing affordable housing waiting lists. People who are on housing waiting lists all across this province wait for years for decent and affordable housing. Sometimes they die waiting for it. Sometimes when they apply because they have children at home and they need a unit with three or four bedrooms in it and put their name on the list, by the time their name comes to the top of the list—which in Toronto is 17 years, on average—those children are all grown up, they've all moved away and they're not there anymore, and therefore you're no longer eligible for that for which you applied, because you don't have the children still at home to occupy those units.

We need a real timeline on the list. People ought not to wait any more than a few months, or at most a year, before they get action for affordable housing. That's the kind of commitment a government needs to make. We

need action to improve housing affordability for low-income people, including a new monthly housing benefit; not just that your rent geared to income is calculated yearly, but that there be a monthly housing benefit and that it be affordable so that low-income people have that opportunity.

I can see I'm being signalled. Just one last point I'd like to make before I stop today, and that's a reformed housing legislation, including stronger rent control and inclusionary zoning at the municipal level. Those are the four tests. I'll deal with that later, when I stand back up on the next date.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I'd just remind the member that because we are past the six-and-a-half-hour mark—

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Seven hours.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** —or seven hours, we're into 10-minute rotations. So I probably gave you a couple of extra minutes there.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** But she got 20.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** That's fine.

Anyway, by the rules, it now being past 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we will have question period.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Once again it gives me great pleasure, on behalf of my Leeds–Grenville page, Tyler Millson, who's got a wonderful head of hair, unlike his MPP—I'd like to introduce some very special guests. His dad, Bart Millson, is in the gallery, and I'm very pleased to introduce his grandparents Bill and Nancy Millson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** My good friend the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore and I are delighted to introduce some 32 farmers from Perth–Wellington, who have come to spend the day here in Toronto. They'll be visiting the minister's riding—the two of us—and having a wonderful day, bridging that rural-urban divide with a bridge of friendship.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'm very pleased to introduce the mother of our page from Kingston and the Islands, Erik Stein: Petra Stein, who is in the gallery here and who is the daughter of Felix and Alzira D'Sousa, good friends of mine in the Kingston area.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. In the wake of the eHealth scandal, the Premier gave his sol-

emn commitment that he had put a stop to sole-sourcing government contracts. He didn't say, "Unless it's convenient"; he made a clear commitment that all future government contracts would be put to competitive public tender.

How does the Premier justify his government's approval of the recent multi-million dollar sole-source contract for the purchase of train cars for the air-rail link approved by the Metrolinx board as well as the Minister of Transportation?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know the member opposite has all the information on this file, because I have given him a letter that was written by Coulter Osborne, who laid out the details of the deal and who, in fact, said that it was a very reasonable choice for us to make.

The fact is that Metrolinx is exercising a contract option from the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit contract in California, which was an open, competitive procurement process. I have said in the House before that all of the rules have been followed. It's not uncommon, as the former Minister of Transportation would know, in the transportation industry to join another procurement process to get the best price possible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** We have a copy of that letter from Coulter Osborne. It confirms that Metrolinx did not issue a public tender. In fact, Mr. Osborne clearly states in his letter that it was the government's onerous time constraints on the project that made it impossible for Metrolinx to issue a public tender.

According to Mr. Osborne's letter, the treasury board and cabinet authorized the sole-sourcing of this contract by calling it "an expedited procurement process." Call it what you will; there was no competitive bid and there was no public tender issued by this government on this multi-million dollar contract.

The Premier and his cabinet may not care to know whether taxpayers are getting the best value for their dollar, but taxpayers do. Will he agree to order a public tender on this contract?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I first of all want to welcome the member opposite to the discussion of public transit, because they have been markedly absent from that discussion—for decades, really.

I just want to speak to the issue of the open procurement. Coulter Osborne, in his letter to Mr. Robert Siddall of Metrolinx, says, "Joining the SMART procurement"—which is the procurement that I just referenced—"in this way seems to me to have been a 'no risk decision' that enabled Metrolinx to take advantage of a larger similar vehicle procurement process in California that was open and competitive."

As I said before, it is not uncommon in the transportation industry, when there are large purchases being made, when there has been a procurement process in place, that another entity would tag onto that contract to get the best deal for the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** The fact is, it didn't need to be that way. Ontario could have done its own tender. The fact is that by imposing an artificial, unnecessary timeline on this project, this government essentially forced Metrolinx to abandon an open, competitive bid process. All Canadian content rules were ignored. It took cabinet to white-wash this sole-sourced deal by calling it an expedited procurement process. This, so that even Fairness Commissioner Coulter A. Osborne is compelled to bless an offensive deal as being fair and in the public interest.

Speaker, nothing is fair, nothing is in the public interest about a multi-million dollar company that excludes companies like Siemens from bidding on this contract.

Will the Premier insist on ensuring that this contract is put to a public tender so that Ontario taxpayers know they're getting the best deal possible?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think it's beneath even the member opposite to cast aspersions on the integrity of Coulter Osborne. I really think that that is absolutely outrageous.

Let me just continue to read from his recommendation on this: "In addition, the fact that there are no commercially available DMUs in production in North America militates in favour of acquiring DMUs under the umbrella of the SMART RFP...."

"In my view, joining the SMART RFP"—which is the deal that we engaged in—"in the manner generally described above was manifestly reasonable ... In the end, it will provide Metrolinx with FRA-compliant DMUs within a delivery time that meets Ontario's needs, and at a highly competitive price."

That is why we engaged in this. That is why Metrolinx worked with Sonoma. I think it is beneath the member opposite to question that.

#### POWER PLANT

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. We just heard about a sole-sourced deal at Metrolinx. Now, it looks like you have another one up your sleeve.

On October 7, 2010, you backtracked, broke the contract with TransCanada and cancelled the Oakville power plant. When asked how much this would cost Ontario families, you said you would be pleased to share this information with the public. It's now been 148 days since you backtracked, made that commitment to share information, and you haven't told us anything.

How much are Ontario families going to pay on their hydro bills for you breaking this signed contract to save the seat of the member for Oakville, making him the first charter member of the McGuinty seat-saver club?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** As I've said repeatedly and say often publicly and in this place, the OPA is still in discussions with TransCanada and those conversations are progressing well, which is good news. We're looking

forward to those consultations and discussions continuing until they reach a resolution.

There's nothing new about that. This is something that we've talked about and been upfront about from the very beginning. We're looking forward to those discussions continuing. We're looking forward to those discussions finding some form of resolution, and when they do, I'll be more than happy to share it with the member opposite, the people of Ontario and all members of this Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Page 34 of your long-term energy plan says the "procurement of a peaking natural gas-fired plant in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge area is still necessary."

One possible location for this project is land owned by TransCanada on Witmer Road in Cambridge. The CEO of your unelected, unaccountable Ontario Power Authority said that one of the discussions with TransCanada has to be about alternatives and that it could include the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge project.

Will you confirm for the House and the people of Ontario today that you will issue a fully transparent, competitive RFP to procure this new power plant and ensure the best value for Ontario families who pay the bills?

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**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member likes to enter into speculation about things that may or may not be happening. I'm going to talk about what we know. What we know is that we have a 20-year plan for energy that's going to provide a clean, reliable, healthy, renewable future for this province, build a healthier future for our kids and grandkids and create thousands of clean energy jobs.

What we don't know is why the member opposite and his leader are afraid to share their plan with Ontario families. We can speculate on that as well. Maybe it's because you don't support our clean energy benefit, which has taken 10% off the bills of Ontario families. Maybe it's because you don't support the thousands of clean energy jobs that we're creating right across this province. Maybe it's because you want to hammer Ontario farmers, as the member for Simcoe-Grey indicated earlier in the month, and take away that \$10,000 a month on average that those farmers are able to make off our microFIT—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I didn't get an answer but I did get the minister confirming that he has so much trust in his own plan that he keeps tearing pages out of it day after day after day.

It's interesting to hear that the minister would not confirm that he would issue an RFP on this project. Ontario families have seen how much your sole-source deals have cost them before: eHealth, Samsung, Metrolinx, the Windsor Energy Centre, the LHINs, Casino Niagara, just to name a few.

When he was asked about the talks with TransCanada, the CEO of the OPA said, "I'm not going to rule out anything."

Minister, I ask you again: Will you today avoid repeating your sweetheart Samsung deal, rule out sole-sourcing this billion-dollar power plant to TransCanada alone and ensure the best values for families in this great province who pay the bills?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member likes, as he does, to chirp about our efforts to build a clean energy economy in this province, but why doesn't he want to talk about his own plan? I think it's pretty obvious that the PCs would scrap the Samsung initiative and kill \$7 billion of private sector investment, as well as the 16,000 Ontario jobs that go with it.

Why don't you be straight up with Ontario families and those workers about what you're going to do? What's in your plan? Speaker, they want to send a message to the entire world that Ontario is no longer open for business. Frankly, they're against foreign companies; they're against foreign investment; they've proven they're against foreign students. The only thing foreign they seemed to like was foreign, US-imported power, because they couldn't produce enough power to provide families and businesses across this province with the amount of generation that was required. Thank goodness those days are gone. I know Ontario families are going to see right through them and they're not going—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question?

#### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. This week we've heard from people about their concerns. They see the cost of everything, from gasoline to home heating to getting proper medical care for their loved ones, get more expensive while their paycheques are staying the same. The Premier says he has to make their lives more expensive while handing out corporate tax giveaways worth over \$6 billion. Why does the Premier keep putting people last?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's always a pleasure to receive questions from my honourable colleague. One of the things I want to point out to my colleague is that it's true we have a plan in place to reduce the level of taxation on Ontario businesses. We think it's important that we be competitive, not just with businesses in other parts of the world but with businesses that are competing against us in other provinces in Canada.

In addition to that, I'll point out to my honourable colleague that as we move forward to reduce our level of taxation on our businesses, we've also made some tremendous progress in our schools and our health care. Test scores are up, graduation rates are up and Ontario students have cracked the top 10 globally in international testing. Not only are we measuring wait times in health care for the first time; we now have the shortest wait times in the country. So we can walk and chew gum at the same time. We can reduce corporate taxes, we can improve our schools and we can improve health care for

our families. We're working together on behalf of the economy and on behalf of our society.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In the past, the Premier has also been unequivocal. In fact, he slammed a former Premier for not caring about gasoline prices and urged him to get out of his chauffeur-driven car. He denounced a previous government's corporate tax cuts, saying that they would lead to closing hospitals and firing nurses. Eight years later, hospital budgets are frozen, ERs in Fort Erie and Port Colborne are closed, corporate tax rates are being slashed, and Premier McGuinty is the one in the chauffeur-driven car. After eight long years, has the Premier forgotten who sent him here and why?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I would have gladly attended the NDP fundraiser at Barberian's last night but I couldn't afford the \$500; it was too much. Today's NDP moves in very expensive circles. It's not something they used to do. It's an unfortunate development.

Let me tell you a bit about some of the other things we've done to help Ontario families. Ninety-three per cent of Ontarians have received a permanent tax cut. Ninety thousand people no longer pay personal income tax in the province of Ontario. The average family with an \$80,000 income is seeing a 10% income tax cut; that's \$355 per year for mom and dad, this year and every year going forward. On top of that, there's our new children's activity tax credit: \$50 each year to help pay for sports or art and music classes. There are a number of other items which I look forward to speaking about in my final supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The fact remains that while banks and oil companies come out the big winners from the Premier's tax cuts, families are left with the \$6.8-billion bill, and they're paying more for everything from home heating to gas at the pump. Why are families missing from this Premier's equation?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm not sure if that was a subject of conversation at that \$500-a-head fundraiser last night at Barberian's. Again, we would have liked to have gone but we can't afford those prices.

What I can say is that on so many different occasions when we worked hard on behalf of Ontario families, put in our \$12-billion tax reductions over the course of three years, whether it was the Ontario child benefit, whether it was our children's activity tax credit, whether it's full-day kindergarten, which is saving our families thousands of dollars annually in day care costs, this party stood opposed to those kinds of measures. They've opposed our interventions to stand up for Ontario families and help out with their household expenses.

We will continue to bring a balanced, thoughtful, responsible approach to governing. We understand that we need a strong economy to support a caring society, a caring society characterized in part by good schools and good health care, and we continue to make measurable progress in both those areas.

## GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. The Premier's corporate tax cuts hand banks—banks—\$535 million, no strings attached. They're not obliged to create any jobs or make any new investments. Families are already stretched to the limit and they're footing the bills for that generosity. And when people ask for a break on their home heating bills, the Premier says he can't afford it.

Why can the Premier afford a tax break for banks while offering little to families who want quality health care and want a break from the growing cost of living?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, this is a part of old-style NDP politics: You attack businesses; you attack the corporate sector. It's an easy thing to do.

One of the fastest growing sectors in Ontario today is our financial services. We're close to nearly 300,000 jobs around the province because of the health and vitality of our financial services sector. On top of that, our brand has gone platinum globally as a result of its performance during a terrible economic recession. When she thinks it's quick and easy to attack financial services, I'd ask her to keep in mind that there are 300,000 Ontario moms and dads who are working in financial services, who bring home money to support their families on the basis of that connection with a very important industry of which we can all be very, very proud.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Families know that the McGuinty government's priorities are very obvious: a multi-billion corporate tax cut instead of a break on the heating bill, an unfair tax on gasoline and haircuts, while charging seniors waiting in hospitals \$1,800 a day. How can the Premier be surprised his popularity is sinking when he is so out of touch with the families across this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to remind my honourable colleague: The comprehensive tax reforms that we have put in place benefit families to the tune of \$12 billion over three years in comparison to \$3 billion for businesses over three years.

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I know my honourable colleague is adamantly opposed to our tax reforms, but I don't think she fully understands how important it is and how urgent it is that we take measures to strengthen this economy. We have been hit by a powerful economic recession. In many ways, our world has changed: We now have a high dollar, we have a weakened US trading partner, and we have a weakened European Union which is no longer driving growth in the global economy to the same extent that it used to.

We've got to do some things inside Ontario to make ourselves stronger so we can continue to support our schools and our hospitals. I haven't met a single grandmother, grandfather, mother or father who is not prepared to do what it takes to ensure that we secure a bright future for our kids.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The people of Ontario tell me that they want a Premier who listens. Instead, they have a Premier who ignores their voices and dodges the facts. The government can protect families from growing costs and improve the health care system, but the Premier just doesn't seem to give a damn anymore.

After eight long years in office, why does this Premier now stand for everything that he ran against?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to give you—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Always good to hear from my friend from the Ottawa Valley, but I think I want to speak to the NDP.

My honourable colleague, the leader of the NDP, forgets that when we brought forward one of the most progressive initiatives to help children in struggling working families in Ontario, the Ontario child benefit, they voted against that. That's benefiting Ontario children. In fact, it's benefiting 1.3 million Ontario children to the tune of \$1,100 every year. They voted against that.

We put forward a measure to take 90,000 low-income Ontarians off the income tax rolls; they stood against that.

We put in place our senior homeowners' property tax grant; it's \$500. It's helping 600,000 Ontario seniors; they voted against that.

At the end of the day, I look forward to being judged on our record in terms of what we're doing to help those people who are most vulnerable in Ontario.

## SMALL BUSINESS

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

The backbone of Ontario's economy is our thousands of small businesses, most of them family-run businesses or small companies with only a few staff. Yet small business owners have to spend more and more hours away from their families meeting the demands of your government's red tape rule makers.

Minister, why won't you provide relief to the thousands of small and family-run businesses by cutting the burden of the rules and regulations you place on them that keep them from creating prosperity and jobs in Ontario?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** In fact, I applaud the member opposite for working for small business. What I would like to say is that while she may be tabling a private member's bill in the House related to the small business industries, we would ask the same member to be very supportive of the number of initiatives that this government has taken to support small business.

For example, the last budget introduced significant tax policy measures to help small business. So while this member purports to support small business, how could the member vote against a 20% decrease in the small business corporate income tax that is such a big help to business?

We appreciate that she would stand in the House in support of small business, but when the rubber hits the road—and small businesses watch us very carefully—when there are measures that are introduced to help small business, they expect the same kind of support from the members opposite, and so would we.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Your continuing failure to provide relief to small businesses owners and employees is because of your fundamental lack of respect for how hard they work and how important they are to our economy. That's why I introduced a small business bill of rights: to change the attitude of government towards small business.

Government needs to stop being a punitive regulator and start being a supporter of small businesses. Will you support my bill and help restore respect for small business in Ontario?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Again, I applaud the members opposite who might purport to support small business. Small businesses need to see support from all of us. They are the backbone of this economy.

I have to suggest, though, that the number of initiatives that we have been doing to support them have been voted against by that party, and I want to ask her why. Why, in this last economic update of October, when we offered that 10% relief directly to small business on those utility bills, did the member opposite vote against that initiative? We have to suggest that the Canadian Federation of Business, which I know the member opposite speaks to, was dramatically supportive of these initiatives. When we launched the Open for Business initiative across our government to work with all ministries and with all sectors of our economy, this is the same party that did not support that initiative, and we demand some consistency—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. The minister has admitted that there are problems providing intervener services to the deaf-blind community. CBC Radio and the Toronto Sun have exposed the problem. I have been working with the deaf-blind community to stop the ministry from making harmful cuts to services to people like Caitlin Ryan, from the Premier's own riding, and from Carl Ford, whose mother, Julia, is here in the gallery today.

Changes to the assessment tool will deny people with significant loss of vision and hearing the intervener services they so desperately need. Why is this minister holding the deaf-blind community hostage while she dithers on her plan?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, I want to say thank you to the parents of deaf-blind children for their advocacy. If we did not have these parents here, coming to see us and coming to talk to us about the needs of their kids, there would be no other person talking on their behalf. So I want to thank them for being here.

Unfortunately, there is false messaging going around, and the member of the opposite party continues to distribute these wrong messages. There is no cut in the budget of the deaf-blind. Since we came to power we have more than doubled that budget, and I'm very pleased to be saying that. Every year we have improved the budget; we have added money into the budget. We are out consulting on a model—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The people in the gallery here today came for concrete answers, not thank-yous, and they did not hear this minister's litany of excuses. Carl Ford needs a commitment today. He wants to live his life. He wants to continue working in his community. Caitlin Ryan wants to finish her education and become a productive adult with much to offer this province. They won't be able to accomplish their goals if their support system is cut in half or if anything is done to change the intervener status. Why won't this minister reveal her plan today and assure the deaf-blind community that their services won't be slashed?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Further to an agreement with the human rights commission, we have to transform this intervener and interpreter service. The system that we have inherited was unfair, and we need to transform the system. On the contrary, we're not cutting any money from the budget. We are transforming the services so that they are fairer, more transparent and financially sustainable.

On this side of the House, we comply with the human rights commission when we signed an agreement with them, so that's what we are doing. We have parents involved, we have interveners involved and we have our stakeholders involved. What is out for consultation will not be implemented; it's out for consultation. We need the input, we are welcoming the input and we will continue to work with the community—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** New question.

#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, yesterday phase 3 of full-day kindergarten was announced. I'm very excited that this program is moving forward. I'm hearing from my constituents, who are also excited and looking forward to the day when it will be available in all Ontario schools. However, the opposition leader yesterday said that this was a promise that we were unable to keep, as the government had not supported the rollout of the program with new funds.

1100

Minister, my constituents deserve to know about the implementation of this program and how we will ensure that full-day kindergarten is rolled out in a responsible manner. What can I tell my constituents in response to this claim by the opposition leader? Are we sufficiently funding the full-day kindergarten program?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** That's an important question on a very important issue, an issue we are hearing a great deal of support for. The member can tell her constituents that we are taking a phased approach. Yesterday, we announced the financial dollars assigned to phase 3 schools. That's an amount of \$280 million to support schools and to add 900 new full-day kindergarten spaces. We will, at that phase, have accomplished providing spaces in 1,700 schools for families and parents who very much need this.

Now, I understand the opposition. They are not committed to this. They will not follow through with what parents are telling them they want. They are prepared to have have and have-not schools. We are committed to the full implementation—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** This will be great news to take back to my riding, as I can inform my constituents that we are fully committed to this program and helping our youngest learners succeed and get the best start in life.

Minister, yesterday the Leader of the Opposition also said that he planned to halt the implementation of full-day kindergarten if he was elected Premier. Parents in my riding are concerned about this, as they are very excited to enrol their children in this program. Minister, could you please share with this House your views on why we are so committed to this program?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I understand; I'm getting the same kinds of calls in my constituency office. There's no question that parents want this program and educators want this program, and they are very concerned with the thinking on the other side of the House; that they don't understand why supporting our youngest learners is one of the best investments that we can make.

I have a quote here from the director of education in the Leader of the Opposition's own riding, who says, "It is very gratifying to see the priority the government is placing on giving children a good start in school. Research shows that when students enter grade 1 ready to learn, they are more confident and more likely to be successful in school."

That is why our government is making this commitment. Parents need to understand that we are the only party in this province who is absolutely committed to the full implementation, by 2014, of full-day kindergarten, using a model of a teacher—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. The government talks of its Open for Business strategy as if it helps business. We know that it is just a paper-pushing process inside government ministries.

But let's go back to the first promise you made when you announced Open for Business. You promised, "The

government will reduce the amount of regulation in Ontario by 25% in the next two years."

You made this promise on March 6, 2009. The two years are up on Sunday. Will you tell us how you will cut 25% of Ontario's regulations between today and Sunday?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm delighted to talk about the tremendous work we're doing for Open for Business. We have launched a very exciting and frankly historic engagement between the private sector and the government, and we have done this by sectors.

The first sector was BILD and all of the developers that they represent, as they interact with a number of ministries all at the same time. Then we moved on to the manufacturing sector. We're working with the medical devices sector and we're working with the information and communications technologies sector, and when we bring them to the table we are hearing from them that they're excited to engage in a process where, for the first time in all of their interaction with governments over a number of years, including with those that purport to support business, in fact they've never had an opportunity to have deputies from all the ministries at the table at the same time. When we launch these initiatives, the Premier of the province is at that table.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Minister, you've been the Minister of Economic Development and Trade since June 2009, 20 months out of the two years since your government made the promise to cut regulations. Will you tell the thousands of small and family businesses in Ontario why you have failed to stand up and help them by cutting red tape? Why should any business person in Ontario believe any promise you make when you have abysmally failed to keep the first promise you made?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm not sure what the opposition would call a failure. Is it removing 1,700 certificates of approval at the Ministry of the Environment, many that were kicking around in 1995, when her party was the government? What do you call a failure, the harmonization of regulations between Ontario and Quebec for the transportation industry, so that you can drive the same truck through Ontario and through Quebec when we're selling our products around this country and the world? What kind of success would this member like to hear? From the IT sector that is telling us that they are elated with the opportunity to wipe out these kinds of problematic areas in interacting with our government?

We are delivering on the priorities that they, as a sector, are giving to us, and we're doing it within a time frame that is working for the industry. Those are successes of Open for Business. I would encourage the member opposite to go to our website—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### NORTHERN ECONOMY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. Minister, you come from northern Ontario, so you see the same

things as I: town after town in northern Ontario that has lost their only employer in the forest industry; the northern economy being devastated; people unemployed by the thousands across the north. Your response so far in seven years has been pretty inadequate at best.

Tomorrow, you're going to make this announcement in Sudbury about the growth plan. Tell me why anybody in northern Ontario should think that any plan you bring forward is going to be any different than what you did over the last seven years.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I'm delighted to have an opportunity to speak about our excitement at being able to release the growth plan, which is an economic vision for the next 25 years for northern Ontario, the second growth plan released in the province. A real priority of our government, obviously, is northern Ontario, and we are going to be looking at ways that we can guide investment decisions from southern Ontario, based on what northerners have told us.

This has been a three-year consultation period. We've talked to thousands of northerners. They've given their advice to us. Tomorrow, indeed, in Thunder Bay and Sudbury, we'll be releasing the details. We've got some very specific initiatives that we're excited about, which again, I believe, will reflect the northerners' view of how we can develop the north in a very exciting way.

We all know about the many opportunities that are developing there, whether it's through the wood supply competition to our new forest tenure modernization process or, indeed, our commitment to the Ring of Fire development. The long and the short is, this is an exciting day tomorrow in northern Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, what you call "excitement," I would call rage. People in northern Ontario are upset with you because you have not responded to the economic downturn in northern Ontario. The growth plan is not going to deal with the nub of the issue. You talked about the Ring of Fire. Cliffs Natural Resources has said that they're not going to build a refinery smelter in Timmins, in Sudbury, in Thunder Bay or Greenstone if we don't deal with the price of electricity. They're going to do it somewhere else.

I don't expect for you tomorrow, all of a sudden, to fall off the turnip truck and finally understand that you've got to do something about the electricity prices, so I ask you again: If you're not going to deal with what the real issues are in northern Ontario, why should northerners have any confidence in what you have to announce tomorrow?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** We are responding in a very direct way. We have already, as a result of our discussion through the growth plan, brought forward incentives that are going to help the industries in the north. In terms of forestry and mining, our corporate tax breaks and the tax reforms that are put in place are bringing down costs and bringing more investment to northern Ontario. We are excited about that.

Our commitment to the Ring of Fire development and seeing a processing facility in the north is one that we feel very strongly about. We're in some very, very good discussions with Cliffs Natural Resources as well as other companies. We have made available to the forestry sector up to \$1 billion, and there are more incentives to come through the wood supply competition.

The long and the short is that we have responded in a very strong and aggressive way. We are seeing an upswing in the northern Ontario economy related to the mining development. Boy, I wish I had more time to talk about some of the extraordinary things that are happening—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1110

## ELDER ABUSE

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. A recent story about elder abuse in the media has shocked many people living in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River. The media reported that on February 23, paramedics found an elderly woman unconscious and suffering from frostbite in an uninsulated garage in a home in my riding. She has since been taken to hospital, where she remains in life-threatening condition after suffering a stroke.

A story like this has people asking what our government is doing to help protect seniors from elder abuse. Can the minister please tell this House what the government is doing to help protect seniors from elder abuse in my riding and other parts of the province?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I thank the member from Scarborough—Rouge River for that very important question. I can't speak on the specifics of this case, but I can tell you I believe that each and every one of us in this House finds any form of elder abuse despicable and very, very disturbing.

The safety and well-being of Ontario's seniors is a priority for me, as well as our government, and that's why I'd like to take the opportunity to tell people in Ontario what we're doing for elder abuse. One of the things we have been doing since 2003 is we've invested \$5.2 million to help in the prevention of elder abuse. We are one of the first governments to fund prevention of elder abuse. We're investing \$900,000 a year in ONPEA, which is the Ontario Network—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Support for elder abuse prevention is good news for seniors in Ontario. But while this story has raised the profile on the prevalence of elder abuse in communities across Ontario, the fact remains that there has been a rise in the number of elder abuse stories and cases.

Recently, there have been stories reported in the media of seniors receiving calls from people claiming to be family and asking for money. All together, these stories

highlight a widespread problem of elder abuse that takes many forms, including fraud and scams against Ontario seniors.

March is Fraud Awareness Month, and I know for a fact that seniors want to learn more. Can the minister tell this House where seniors can find help and what initiatives were taken to inform seniors about elder abuse?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** The member is right: March is Fraud Awareness Month. But, again, I want to stress that any form of elder abuse is unacceptable, and we are doing everything we can to help. One of the things that's important is if anyone is a victim of elder abuse or knows of someone, I would encourage them to call the police immediately.

For protection when it comes to fraud, it's important to give out some information to our seniors on what we are doing. We have a province-wide Seniors Safety Line. It's available 24 hours, seven days a week in 154 languages. That number is 1-866-299-1011. We also have consumer tips on how to avoid fraud, and those can be found on [ontario.ca](http://ontario.ca)—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### RED TAPE REDUCTION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is to the Premier. Your government boasts about cutting red tape through your Open for Business, but I have here an internal document from OMAFRA which provides advice on how to hide regulations or burdens so they can report red tape reductions that don't actually exist. It recommends hiding burdens in definitions and forms because those don't count. It recommends things like changing "sheep and cattle" to "livestock" because that reduces two burdens to one: "If a regulation requires an annual report 'to be prepared' and 'submitted,' that counts as two burdens. However, if the requirement 'to be prepared' was removed, only one burden would remain."

Premier, have you so lost touch that you thought pulling the wool over people's eyes was more important than helping farmers and businesses in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm not sure what paper you must be referring to or if you in fact drafted it up yourself. What I will tell you is that this week, our government launched Open for Business with the agriculture and food sector, and we did it in this very building. We brought representatives from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. It was a mixed bag of a number of people from different sectors of agriculture, and it was the first time all of these individuals were in the same room at the same time with all of the deputies that represent all of the various ministries that they interact with, whether that be the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of the Environment—bringing them together.

What this organization did was table for us their top five priorities of where they want us to work to smooth

life for them as they interact with the government. It was a very lively debate—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Minister, here is an example of how an internal document from the ministry recommends hiding burdens from farmers: "Rather than stating within a regulation that a stakeholder must submit his name, address and phone number (three requirements) simply state that the stakeholder must complete the form (one requirement). That form could then require the name, address and phone number." It also recommends using commission regulations because, apparently, they decided that those don't count towards the burden.

Clearly, Open for Business lets you boast about cutting red tape but does nothing to help farmers or agribusiness. Minister, do you really believe that farmers are that easily duped? Will you apologize and tell us how many of the burdens you claim to have reduced were actually a sham?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** If I may quote a great MPP in this House, Pat Hoy, you're supposed to turn the manure spreader on when you leave the building.

In fact, from the member opposite what I would like is a copy, if he's at all serious—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I'm going to ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment that she just made.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I withdraw.

Please do deliver, if you're at all serious, a copy of whatever it is you're reading from; it's not familiar material to me.

What is familiar material is the fact that what all the farmers are saying right now is that they think that you and your party would have an opportunity to rip up all of those feed-in-tariff contracts with our Green Energy Act that we've signed with them, which is a value, on average, to the farmer, of \$10,000. The number one concern today out there is that party ripping up those contracts, and they actually want an answer from this party. I will—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Three years ago, right before an election, the McGuinty Liberals announced the construction of a new long-term-care home in Welland, with about 100 beds or so. But here we are, and construction hasn't started yet. There doesn't even seem to be a plan to get this home built.

Why did the Premier make a promise to Niagara area families that he had no intention whatsoever of keeping?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm happy to have the opportunity to talk about long-term-care homes and the improvements that we've been able to drive in the long-term-care-home sector.

We are adding capacity. I will check into the details of this particular case. What I can tell you is that we've now got almost 9,000 more beds open. That means 9,000 more people who are getting the care they need in long-term-care homes. We've got plans to add another 1,000 beds. Those plans are underway.

We have also worked very hard to rebuild and re-develop some of the older long-term-care homes that, frankly, do not meet today's higher standards. We're continuing to improve care in long-term-care homes. We're continuing to add new—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's not just broken long-term-care promises that frustrate Niagara families: Two local emergency rooms were closed, despite widespread opposition. Families across Niagara region are seeing their local health care needs erode, yet the minister says that the NHS, Niagara Health System, "is doing excellent work." That is out of touch. Many families have lost faith in the Niagara Health System, a feeling that, in fact, I understand.

Instead of more broken promises and out-of-touch remarks from this health minister, will the Premier take a step back, listen to Niagara's residents and support an independent investigation of the Niagara Health System?  
1120

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Health care is getting better in Niagara; make no mistake about it. Because we measure, we can actually report the results for people. The rhetoric aside, let the numbers speak for themselves.

Just last week, the St. Catharines Standard ran an article saying that in nearly every category the Niagara Health System wait times were lower than the targets required for 90% of cases as set by the local health integration network. Let me share how health care is better for people now: The wait for hip replacement has been cut by 201 days; that's a 58% cut in wait time there. Knee replacement is down by 36%. The wait time for CT outpatient is down by 50%, and what's very exciting for the people in Niagara—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Last week you announced 40 new renewable energy projects across Ontario. Among them were six solar installations in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock that together are going to produce 51 megawatts of clean electricity for Ontario's grid. Obviously, this is welcome news. It means job creation in my area, dollars into our local economy and helping Ontario get off dirty coal. These are exceptionally important things for my riding and for the province that a few opposition members have vehemently opposed. Given that, can the minister tell me that the government remains fully committed to seeing these projects move forward?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to thank the member for raising what really is a very important question. We were very proud last week to announce those 40 new clean energy projects which will represent an investment of three billion private sector dollars in our economy and 7,000 Ontario jobs.

Yes, the government very firmly stands by the development of cleaner sources of energy for the province of Ontario and we certainly stand by our feed-in tariff program.

The member is right though: There are members of this House whose opposition to clean energy is sending a threatening and frankly insulting message, like the member for Simcoe-Grey, for example, when he said, "We're not going to sign any more of these feed-in tariff contracts. Those days will be gone. Whoever gets a contract now, enjoy it" while you can. That kind of arrogance may define those guys over there but it will not deter us from our responsibility of building a cleaner, more reliable—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** Minister, I'll be sure to share the comments of the member of Simcoe-Grey with my constituents in Beaverton, Eldon, Lindsay and Kawartha Lakes, where these clean energy projects will be located, as well as with the many farmers in my riding who are taking part in the government's popular microFIT program.

Cleaning up our energy system is one of the most important things our generation can do for our kids and grandkids. It's a responsibility that no government could in good conscience ignore. Anyone can tell you that cleaner energy and renewing our electricity system has a cost that shows up on our bills. Can the minister tell us to what extent renewable energy affects that?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** As I've said in the past, we've laid out a long-term energy plan that clearly illustrates how we will renew our energy system and how we'll move off of coal to cleaner sources of power.

The member talks about costs that show up on consumers' bills. I want to remind him and others as well of one cost that consumers often bring up with us, and that's the debt retirement charge, because it allows me to quote the member from Simcoe-Grey once again, who proudly reminded us yesterday, "I brought in the DRC, the debt retirement charge, when I was Minister of Energy."

While the member opposite is trying to explain to farmers why he wants to rip up their contracts, he may want to also remind them why he brought in that debt retirement charge, and in the years that they were in office, did not take a cent off our debt—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## ANTI-CRIME LEGISLATION

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question is to the Attorney General. The Attorney General is well aware that Ontario's current Pawnbrokers Act is severely outdated and unenforceable by police. This law is even older than the

Public Works Protection Act, dating back to 1906. It was written so long ago that it doesn't even include second-hand stores and virtual pawn shops that buy gold through the mail. This lack of effective modern legislation is making it easy for thieves to use pawnshops and second-hand stores to fence the goods they stole from innocent victims in break and enters.

Many of these criminals are taking full advantage of lax legislation. They become chronic property crime offenders who steal multiple times from multiple locations in one day simply because they can. Property crime offenders leave behind a trail of innocent victims who are psychologically, emotionally and financially devastated. Many victims lose precious family heirlooms that can never be replaced.

When will the Attorney General make fighting crime a priority and listen to police leaders who have been telling him that they desperately need new legislation to better protect potential victims of property crime?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We're actually doing what the member opposite and his government didn't do for eight years: We're taking a look at the Pawnbrokers Act and seeing how it can be modernized. We've been working very closely with the police chiefs and the associations, but we have also been working very closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We're trying to come up with amendments that will provide for strengthened law enforcement without raising privacy concerns for all Ontarians.

That has proven to be a challenging line to walk. We will continue to. We will continue to do the work that the member opposite and his government failed for eight years to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** You've had seven and a half years and you're still failing.

The Attorney General made a commitment to the OACP at their 2008 annual general meeting that he would introduce new pawnbrokers legislation. To be effective, the legislation must include a centralized database and a standardized reporting system for the entire province to address the cross-jurisdictional nature of property crime. Under today's outdated legislation, it is almost impossible for police to help recover victims' stolen property. Current investigations are often derailed because an identification of items that is strong enough to proceed in court can't be made when only 15% of the items have serial numbers.

When will the Attorney General make fighting crime a priority and give police leaders much-needed investigative tools? When will he put victims first instead of protecting the identities of criminals?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We actually believe that we can both fight crime and protect the civil rights and civil liberties of Ontarians. That's what we've been working on with the police chiefs—there's a very good discussion going on—and with the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

It may be that the party opposite does not care about the input from the Information and Privacy Commission-

er. It may be that the party opposite would simply introduce amendments without worrying about the civil rights and the freedom of all Ontarians. It may be that they'll introduce amendments and not care what will be done with information gathered and whether the charter rights of Ontarians are actually protected. They'll have an opportunity, in their plan, which we know they have but won't reveal, to tell us whether they're prepared to dismantle the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner as one of their "eliminate the red tape"—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## CURRICULUM

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Premier. Last spring, the government introduced a new health curriculum for Ontario students, but at the last minute, under duress, it cancelled changes to sex education. The government promised it would start a new round of consultations on updates to sex education. What is the status of those consultations, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** What we have done, first of all with respect to the curriculum that is out there, is that we have new physical and health education, save and except for the sex education piece. All of the good work that went into that document is now being implemented in our schools, save and except for the sex education curriculum, which continues to be what was in place in our schools.

We have a process in Ontario where we review our curriculum on a regular basis, and that was the process that was followed. People—parents especially—in Ontario made it very clear that the way that they were engaged around changes to curriculum did not meet their needs, and our Premier made a commitment that we were going to consider how we could do a better job of that. My ministry is taking a very careful look at how we've done it in the past and what some of the most effective ways are, going forward, that we can ensure that the issues of parents—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Health and education groups in Ontario haven't heard a word about the consultations that were promised a year ago. Nothing has been done. There are no consultations.

Ontario children and youth need accurate information about sexually transmitted diseases, sexuality and early pregnancy to develop into healthy adults, but Ontario's sex education curriculum is outdated. It appears that this is the education Premier for everything except sex education. Why is the Premier afraid to talk about sex?

1130

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I think it's important to clarify that we have sex education in our schools now. We have had it for many years, and that continues to be the case.

We have an improved physical health education curriculum in our schools. That did go forward.

We are looking at the process that we have to review curriculum. We review curriculum all the time.

What was evident with the sex education part of our curriculum was that we needed to do a better job. My ministry is working to understand what is the best way, given that we did have a consultation process that obviously was not adequate for parents. So we are looking at ways that we can do a better job of getting their feedback on a very important curriculum for students in our schools.

## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. Ontario has always been good at turning money into research. To foster a culture of innovation that will lead to the creation of long-lasting, knowledge-based jobs for Ontario families means that we need to value-add research back into money.

Western Mississauga has always had the critical mass of world-class skills, proximity to major markets and first-rate infrastructure.

Though entrepreneurs may be good at the science, few are also skilled in the business of business. Entrepreneurs need help and advice from industry experts and access to capital to take their products to market in Ontario and around the world.

Minister, how is our province and your ministry helping forward-looking young companies in areas like Mississauga to succeed?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I know the question is coming from this side of the House because this ministry has never had a question from that side of the House. They don't know what the word "innovation" means.

It is fascinating to me, because we've launched the Ontario Network of Excellence in 14 communities. We don't only respect small business, we are enthusiastic supporters of them. You can now get capital, you can get access to talent and technology in almost every centre.

What's so remarkable about this program is this isn't being done by government bureaucrats. This is being done by the Guelph Chamber of Commerce. So all the money goes to people in Mississauga—Streetsville, home to my friend Her Worship Hazel McCallion.

The city of Mississauga is doing studies to leverage and invest and expand on our regional investment in the great community of Mississauga—Streetsville.

## MINISTER'S COMMENTS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Earlier today in response to a question from the member from Oxford, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, I believe, in her answer, contravened standing order 23(j): "Charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood." In her response, she accused the member of writing a paper himself that he

clearly received through the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

I would humbly ask that you review the Hansard of today when it is made available to you and then rule at a future date if the minister did in fact contravene standing order 23(j), and let the House know—and if so, that she would be given the opportunity at that time to withdraw that comment and apologize.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** On the same point of order, Speaker: I will withdraw if it is inaccurate. But if he would table the papers in the House, I would be happy to confirm that it is in fact documents supposedly that come from OMAFRA.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please stand and withdraw the comment: the unequivocal withdrawal of the comment, without any commentary.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I withdraw, but I would also like—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** An unequivocal withdrawal is sufficient.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order. I would just remind members on both sides of the House that temperate language used in this chamber is most helpful to maintaining order and decorum in this place, and I would say that on both sides.

I would as well remind members of a number of standing orders. The honourable member just reminded members of standing order 23(j), but certainly I would remind them of 23(i). On both sides, many times members are imputing motives over different issues—being cognizant of that. I would certainly hope that all members would be respectful of standing order 20(b) in allowing a member to speak without being interrupted by another member. It would be useful for all sides.

The time for question period has ended.

## VISITORS

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I would just like to welcome to the House Jane Falconer and Mike Harkins from the London Bridge Child Care Services. They work in a child care and might have some interesting observations on the conduct in this House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would welcome those guests. It is not a point of order—we do have a time for introductions—but I think that those observations on the conduct of members of this House, I would say to the honourable member, go both ways, and don't be impugning motive against one side of the House.

I would very much encourage members at all times to be cognizant of our guests, not just from the daycare sector but certainly the numerous students who visit us from grade 5 and the students who are visiting us from grades 10 and 11. We all should be setting a very good example for those future leaders.

## DEFERRED VOTES

## TIME ALLOCATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1137 to 1142.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members will please take their seats.

On March 2, Ms. Smith moved government notice of motion number 54. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

## Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Albanese, Laura  
Arnott, Ted  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Bailey, Robert  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Barrett, Toby  
Bentley, Christopher  
Best, Margaret  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
Colle, Mike  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Dickson, Joe  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad

Duncan, Dwight  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hoy, Pat  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick  
Klees, Frank  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Matthews, Deborah  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Miller, Norm  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol

Moridi, Reza  
Munro, Julia  
Murray, Glen R.  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Ramsay, David  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Savoline, Joyce  
Shurman, Peter  
Smith, Monique  
Sousa, Charles  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Yakabuski, John  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

**Interjection:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? I heard a no.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1145 to 1146.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On December 8, 2010, Ms. Matthews moved second reading of Bill 141. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

## Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Albanese, Laura  
Arnott, Ted  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Bailey, Robert  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Barrett, Toby  
Bentley, Christopher  
Best, Margaret  
Bradley, James J.  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
Colle, Mike  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Dickson, Joe  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad

Duncan, Dwight  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hoy, Pat  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick  
Klees, Frank  
Kular, Kuldip  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Matthews, Deborah  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Miller, Norm  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol

Moridi, Reza  
Munro, Julia  
Murray, Glen R.  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ramsay, David  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Savoline, Joyce  
Shurman, Peter  
Smith, Monique  
Sousa, Charles  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Yakabuski, John  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

## Nays

Bisson, Gilles  
Gélinas, France  
Hampton, Howard

Horwath, Andrea  
Marchese, Rosario  
Miller, Paul

Prue, Michael  
Tabuns, Peter

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

## Nays

Bisson, Gilles  
Gélinas, France  
Hampton, Howard

Horwath, Andrea  
Marchese, Rosario  
Miller, Paul

Prue, Michael  
Tabuns, Peter

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 69; the nays are 8.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

HEALTH PROTECTION  
AND PROMOTION  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2011  
LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION  
ET LA PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 141, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act / Projet de loi 141, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 71; the nays are 8.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** So ordered.

There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1150 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's my pleasure to introduce, in the members' gallery today, Travis Poland and his parents,

Dave and Christine. Travis is going to be one of our new pages on March 21, and he's here on a visit today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Welcome.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Ontario Pork and the Ontario Cattlemen's Association are here at Queen's Park today to deliver a message. Ontario farmers need their government to support them with a business risk management program. This is the same message that the grain farmers delivered last week. AgriStability simply is not working for our livestock producers. After years of losses, they aren't qualifying for the support they need.

Last week, at the Ontario Cattlemen's Association's annual general meeting, Ontario PC leader Tim Hudak reiterated that if elected, a PC government would work with farm leaders to develop a business risk management program based on the cost of production of all commodities. But many farmers can't wait. They are competing against farmers in provinces like Quebec and Alberta that are receiving support from their provincial government. As a result, Ontario farmers are suffering and they are losing market share to other provinces. If that continues, they will also lose processing capacity.

Instead of showing leadership, the McGuinty government is pointing fingers. In their annual report issued last week, the cattlemen's association called on the province to act immediately and unilaterally to kick-start and fund their share of the program. The Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition has asked that same thing. They have written to the minister, they have written to the Premier, and they have talked to the MPPs, but it seems no one is listening.

Ontario needs to take a leadership role and support Ontario's farmers. The PC caucus understands that. We have repeatedly tried to explain that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

### AJAX AND PICKERING HOSPITAL

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Back in 2007, I stood up in this House to announce our government was about to invest 90% of the cost of expanding Ajax and Pickering General Hospital. This project, planned in three phases, remained on track and on budget. I'm proud to say that on February 17, Minister Deborah Matthews and I, along with dedicated Rouge Valley staff, physicians and nurses, celebrated the grand opening and completion of the entire hospital expansion.

The project's three phases included: firstly, the expansion and renovation of the emergency room; secondly, the construction of a new wing, including a complex continuing care unit, 30 additional patient beds and added diagnostic facilities; thirdly, an expanded medical laboratory, additional administrative offices and the two-storey

Harwood Bistro, for the combined grand opening of the entire expansion just last month.

This expansion employed an average of 75 workers per day during its busiest construction months. Our provincial government followed through for us by seeing the Ajax hospital expansion through to its completion. Our government remains committed to health care in Ontario and the Ajax and Pickering hospital is living proof.

Thank you to our "minister with a heart," the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Deborah Matthews, for coming to Ajax-Pickering and helping to deliver this great news on health care.

### RURAL ONTARIO

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** This week was the annual conference for the Ontario Good Roads Association and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association. It is the most important event of the year for these municipal organizations as they seek to share their concerns with their provincial representatives. But instead of giving this conference its full attention, this government calls the House into session, thereby preventing rural Ontario families from having full access to their MPPs. Previous governments showed respect for rural Ontarians by making sure the House did not sit during this important conference. The McGuinty Liberals changed the rules, keeping us in the House instead of allowing us to fully participate in the conference. The Premier and many of his cabinet colleagues attended, while preventing many of us who actually represent rural communities from doing the same.

On Monday night and Tuesday, I spoke with many folks who are incredibly troubled that this government is limiting their access to their MPPs. The provincial-municipal relationship is absolutely critical to ensuring future prosperity in rural communities. Premier McGuinty is so out of touch that he doesn't understand how important it is for rural municipalities to have a close relationship with their MPPs.

This is just another example of the McGuinty government's general disregard for rural Ontario families. This government doesn't understand the needs of rural Ontario and doesn't show it the respect it deserves.

I would hope that, in the future—and I've raised this point before—during the annual conference, this House not sit.

### PHYLLIS MARSHALL

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Black History Month was celebrated with great enthusiasm in my riding of Oak Ridges-Markham this year. At the York Regional Police celebration, I learned about a remarkable Canadian. Phyllis Marshall was born in Barrie in 1921, and shortly after, moved to Toronto. She was a young track star with sights set on the Olympics. When these were cancelled due to World War II, she focused on her singing career. At the age of 22, she performed with her own trio at the Park Plaza Hotel and earned an 18-month engagement.

By 1949, she was on CBC Radio's Blues for Friday. When CBC TV first started, she was part of the Big Revue, and later, the Cross-Canada Hit Parade. In 1959, she featured on the British Broadcasting Corp. with her own special, and over the years, performed with such jazz notables as Oscar Peterson.

Phyllis was also an acclaimed actress at Toronto's Crest Theatre and then went on to dramatic and musical roles in stage, radio and TV productions. In later years, she focused her energies on fundraising for various charities before passing away in 1996.

Phyllis Marshall should be recognized for her great works and talents: as a black Canadian songstress, actress and TV star. I, along with local historical societies, urge all members of this House to help get her inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame.

#### ONTARIO SENIOR GAMES— WINTERFEST 2011

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** On February 15, the county of Haliburton opened its arms to more than 900 athletes participating in Winterfest 2011 Ontario senior games. The games represent the highest level of provincial competition for gold medal winners aged 55 years or older. As home of Ontario's largest population of seniors per capita, Haliburton was the perfect location for this premier event.

Seniors represent a vibrant and vital segment of our local population. They contribute countless hours and are the driving force behind many community services, events and local improvement projects.

During the games, I was reminded time and time again that Ontario seniors are competitive. The performances were nothing short of inspirational. Be it Alpine or Nordic skiing, badminton, ice hockey or volleyball, each athlete was an example of what a healthy, active lifestyle can do to improve health in our senior years.

This event marked the first major games that Haliburton has hosted, and I know the honourable Minister of Health Promotion would agree that Winterfest 2011 in Haliburton topped all.

My sincerest congratulations go out to the Ontario Senior Games Association and the Sport Alliance of Ontario for their success in promoting good health and delivering the games; to the bid committee for the time, energy and talent put forward developing a winning bid; to this government for its dedicated support of an event that spotlights quality of life through physical activity; and most of all, to the amazing athletes, tireless volunteers and our welcoming communities. The success is yours. Congratulations, and thank you.

#### CHINESE CANADIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I would like to commend the London chapter of the Chinese Canadian National Council for their very successful Chinese New Year that was held February 19 at the Covent Garden market in

London. The event brought people together from throughout the city and featured a cultural show, exhibits, demonstrations and dancing.

The London chapter of the Chinese Canadian National Council is committed to encouraging co-operation between Chinese Canadians and other groups. They also work to promote knowledge about the historical and cultural heritage of Canadians of Chinese descent.

Last week, as a part of their ongoing programming in support of these aims, the London Chinese Cultural Centre hosted a Heritage Week celebration that will allow London-area students to learn about Chinese art and culture.

Again, I congratulate the London chapter of the Chinese Canadian National Council, and I wish them every success in their endeavours as they continue to be an important and well-established part of the cultural community in my riding of London-Fanshawe and also through the city of London.

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#### TORONTO AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** This past Sunday, the doors closed on the 38th annual Canadian International AutoShow. It was a tremendous success. More than 300,000 people had a chance to see 1,000 trucks and cars from 125 exhibitors. Thanks go to AutoShow president Ron Loveys, and committee members Joel Cohen, Sandy Liguori, Frank Romeo and Bob Attrell Jr.; AutoShow general manager Tom Tonks; marketing director David McClean; and director of media services Beth Rhind.

The Canadian International AutoShow is owned and operated by the Toronto Automobile Dealers Association, which has been the voice of greater Toronto's 340 new car dealers since 1908.

Toronto's auto dealers recently made a \$2-million donation to the new Ronald McDonald House Toronto—set to be the largest in the world—to provide a home away from home for families with seriously ill children. This will help Ronald McDonald House to serve almost triple the number of families.

Toronto's auto dealers also support initiatives such as the Toronto Police Service child safety seat program, the Trillium Gift of Life Network and the Canadian Safe School Network.

Congratulations on a very successful event.

#### COMMISSAIRE AUX SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinais:** La mission du commissaire aux services en français est de veiller à ce que la population reçoive, en français, des services de qualité du gouvernement de l'Ontario et de surveiller l'application de la Loi sur les services en français. Le commissaire a le mandat de mener des enquêtes indépendantes, selon la Loi sur les services en français, et de soumettre des

rapports d'enquête. Il fait très bien son travail. Nous en sommes fiers et nous le remercions de son engagement envers les services en français.

Par contre, contrairement au vérificateur général, à l'ombudsman, au commissaire à l'environnement et au commissaire à l'intégrité qui, eux, relèvent de l'Assemblée législative, le commissaire aux services en français, lui, relève de la ministre déléguée aux services en français.

J'aimerais faire changer ça et j'ai besoin de votre aide. J'ai écrit une pétition qui demande à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu'il relève directement de l'Assemblée législative. De cette façon, les suivis de ses rapports seront assurés par l'ensemble des députés de l'Assemblée. Il suffit d'aller sur mon site Internet ou celui du parti néo-démocrate afin d'imprimer la pétition, de la signer et de demander à d'autres personnes de faire de même, puis la retourner à l'adresse indiquée.

Il est temps de se faire entendre. Ensemble, nous aiderons le commissaire aux services en français à faire son travail encore mieux. Merci de votre collaboration.

### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I would like to take this opportunity to talk about an important initiative of the McGuinty government: full-day kindergarten.

Last year, our government introduced the full-day kindergarten program to almost 600 schools across the province. By September 2012, an additional 900 schools will be offering full-day kindergarten to 120,000 children across Ontario.

Studies have shown that the return on public investment for young children is at least seven to one. We believe, just as the experts do, that this is the right thing to do for our kids.

The opposition, on the other hand, disagrees with the experts. They don't believe our children are worth this important investment. The opposition leader called full-day kindergarten a "shiny new car." Several members of their caucus are on record as saying the program is too expensive. They don't want to invest in our youth. They don't care about the future success of our province.

Only the McGuinty government is concerned about getting our kids on the road to success, which is absolutely essential if we are to build the kind of workforce we are going to need to compete in the new economy.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA SANTÉ ET LA SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 160, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to occupational health and safety and other matters / Projet de loi 160, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail et la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne la santé et la sécurité au travail et d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'll make my statement during ministerial statements.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I rise for the introduction of the Occupational Health and Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011.

This proposed legislation is about laying the foundation and building the framework for a new and more effective occupational health and safety system in Ontario. Our goal is to protect the working men and women of this province and to accomplish this through the efforts and input of both employees and employers.

On December 16, 2010, the expert advisory panel, led by Tony Dean, delivered its final report. As many know, Mr. Dean is a former secretary of cabinet and is a professor in the school of public policy and governance at the University of Toronto. This expert advisory panel included representatives from labour, business and academia with workplace health and safety experience and expertise.

The final recommendations of this expert advisory panel struck a balance between two key factors: a need to provide better protection and support for workers, especially young and new workers and recent immigrants; and a need to improve compliance supports for the business community, particularly small businesses.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the panel and show our appreciation for the hard, dedicated work they accomplished. Their approach made a consensus report possible, and consensus on such a critically important matter is invaluable.

As we bring this proposed legislation forward, we would hope it will be considered in the same atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation that existed on the expert panel and that we constantly remember that we share the common goal of keeping Ontarians safe.

Overall, the expert panel received more than 400 responses and submissions during consultations and con-

ducted more than 50 meetings with stakeholders across the province.

Our proposed legislation, based on the panel's report, is a road map for making lasting changes to our occupational health and safety system that will benefit all Ontarians, employees and employers alike. We believe that these changes, if passed, will save lives and help prevent injuries for years to come.

Under our proposed amendments:

The ministry would assume responsibility for prevention;

A new chief prevention officer, reporting to the Minister of Labour on strategic priorities, would provide leadership on the prevention of workplace injury and occupational diseases;

The Ministry of Labour would expand its involvement in workplace health and safety education and promotion;

The minister would also have oversight of the province's health and safety associations, under the leadership of the chief prevention officer, and could delegate that oversight to the chief prevention officer;

A new prevention council, with representatives from the worker and employer communities and health and safety experts, would provide valuable input into the direction of the health and safety system and would be asked to endorse any significant changes to the system;

The minister would have the authority to establish standards for health and safety training in order to enhance this training and ensure that workers are properly trained; and

Workers, especially those most vulnerable workers, would have improved protections against reprisals for exercising their rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

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Consultation and further advice from stakeholders and the interim prevention council will assist the ministry in the months ahead to ensure cost-effective and thoughtful implementation of these major reforms.

The expert panel heard from stakeholders who said that they wanted to enhance coordination and alignment of prevention activities in our health and safety system, and we listened. We have accepted the recommendations of the expert panel and thank all of those who worked so hard on the panel's report. We're acting by bringing forward this proposed legislation.

Our government believes that by working together, we can continue to foster workplaces that are healthy, safe and harmonious, and, by doing so, also build a strong economy. We believe our bill would strengthen and better align our health and safety efforts, to the benefit of all. We believe we can and will save lives and prevent injury among Ontarians. The people of this province and those who depend on them deserve no less.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Before I respond to this piece of legislation, I want to first say that I received a call a couple of hours ago from some people in the media, wanting me to comment on this piece of legislation, which, of course, hadn't been tabled. During that dis-

cussion, it certainly appeared that the press were more informed of this piece of legislation than me. Once again, this minister—this is the second piece of legislation he has introduced in the House as the new minister, and no briefing. I got notified today that this bill would be coming forward: no briefing; no interest in providing the opposition members with any knowledge about this bill before our time to respond to it.

So, 20 minutes ago, I received this bill. This bill does amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It also amends the WSIB act. It's a very significant and substantial document. I think this minister is showing this House his arrogance and contempt for the Legislature when it appears that the media is getting more information about this bill than members of the opposition and myself as critic.

I want to just put that on the record, Minister. We've seen this sort of activity in the past. We have seen some ministers on the other side actually engage with the opposition, provide some briefings, provide some prior notice so that we can provide some intelligent, well-thought-out and informed opinions on a piece of legislation, but this minister seems to be going down the same path as the previous Minister of Labour. I encourage him to have a little bit more respect for this House.

We've seen, in this brief period of time for reviewing this bill, that the minister refers to the recommendations of the Tony Dean panel as the motivation for this bill. But I'll say this: Nowhere in the Dean report did it suggest that inspectors and members of the bureaucracy are not compellable witnesses in a civil suit. Nowhere in the Dean report did they suggest that an inspector is not a competent or compellable witness before a board or proceeding relating to a complaint.

There are a number of things in this piece of legislation that clearly have no relation to the Dean report—and I want to put it on the record: This is about people's health and safety. It ought not to be used as a political football or for partisan purposes.

I want to also put on the record that we have 19 agencies already existing in this province that govern and protect workers' safety: the Office of the Employer Advisor, the Office of the Worker Advisor, the WSIB, WorkSmartOntario—and I could go on and on. This minister has created another level of bureaucracy for workplace safety, except that this new office will be totally unaccountable to the Legislature and totally unaccountable to the people of this province. That is a major, major fault that we see coming out of not just this legislation but the track record of this Liberal government.

It appears from a short review of this legislation that we're taking authority for worker injury prevention out of the WSIB and putting it into an unelected, unaccountable office that the minister can hide behind once again. This is indicative of this government creating more and more layers of fog that make it difficult for people to be properly engaged with the government, make it difficult to find out who makes the decisions, where those decisions are made and how to get through that thickening

maze. That's what this piece of legislation does. It doesn't appear to have anything about occupational health and safety, other than protecting the minister.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** First of all, I want to congratulate my colleague on his promotion to Minister of Labour. It certainly brings to mind that theological concept that when God wants to punish you, God answers your prayers. So, the best of luck.

The first thing I have to say is to really echo my colleague. This is a big bill, and we've had 15 minutes—it's very small-point type. Rest assured that we in the New Democratic Party will look through this very thoroughly and give you a reasoned analysis of it.

Suffice to say that the background of this bill was migrant workers being killed on a work site. That's what prompted the Dean committee, the Dean report etc. I have to say to the minister that it's still going on, and the fact that we haven't had more deaths is really just a stroke of luck, because we still have under-inspected workplaces out there. One in a hundred workplaces in Ontario ever sees an inspector from the Minister of Labour. That's the reality. We in the New Democratic Party have asked, after those deaths, that there be a sweep of 10% of all workplaces to at least set a benchmark.

I know I am not alone, as a member of provincial Parliament, in hearing the stories that come into our constituency offices. One story recently was told to me—this is echoed across the province—by someone who did not have landed status but was working while he was waiting for his landed status and citizenship. He was working, of course, in the underground economy and was being paid \$6 an hour.

I said, "Why don't you complain to the Minister of Labour?" Obviously, the reason he didn't was because then he would have no job at all. So I said, "Well, after you get your landed status, after you become a Canadian citizen, maybe then you should complain about this employer to the Minister of Labour." And he said, "Then all my friends would lose their jobs."

That's the kind of reality that workers face in the province of Ontario, and this is in construction. This is where it happens. One of the most dangerous places to work has one of the most dangerous pedigrees. Unless we get inspectors out into the field, not just in the case of an accident or a complaint but pre-emptively to find out where these places are, this problem will never be solved no matter how many panels you set up.

The Ontario Federation of Labour had a wonderful campaign. It was simply, "Kill a worker, go to jail." I hope—and I doubt—that in this legislation we'll see something that strong. Certainly, I hope that the very least we'll see is the 46—count them—recommendations of the Dean committee. Quite frankly, I doubt that we will. I flipped through it—that's all the time I had to review it—but I certainly saw some very significant parts of the Dean committee report recommendations missing. So we hope that we'll see that, and we also hope, of course, that the prevention council, which we will be

monitoring—trust me—really follows through on those recommendations.

But first and foremost, it doesn't matter how many laws you have and how many statutes you've got on the books. If you don't actually enforce them, they mean nothing. What we have in the province of Ontario is a lack of enforcement where worker safety is concerned.

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I know my colleague comes from a Portuguese background. My husband is from a Portuguese background. Many Portuguese come into this country and work in construction. That's the reality. So we know it first-hand. We know they work illegally. We know they work where there are no worker safety councils. We know they work under the table. We know it's going on.

Who is going to stop it? Who is going to speak for workers who really and very truly cannot speak for themselves? In the case in point, the example I gave, he can't even complain after he becomes a Canadian citizen, because then his friends will lose their jobs.

This is the reality of the Canadian workplace as we live it and know it, and this is what resulted in those four migrant deaths. We still have that going. I doubt that this will solve that. I say, kudos to the Minister of Labour for bringing anything forward. Kudos to the Dean report and its committee for the recommendations. Let's actually enact them. Let's actually enforce them.

I know it costs money. This is the problem. This is why it's not going to happen, I fear. Let's get more inspectors in the field pre-emptively checking workplaces before accidents happen so that we know what's going on out there and so that we can protect those who are effectively silenced right now.

## PETITIONS

### PENSION PLANS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Pension Benefits Act ... regulations for 'loss of sponsor' of defined benefit pension plans only permit windup and annuity purchase; and

"Whereas, in the present economic climate, the cost of annuities is at a 25-year high, with no relief in sight;

"Therefore the purchase of annuities exacerbates the punitive impact of windup on Nortel pension plan members and others in similar situations, and increases the costs passed on to the taxpayers of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To amend the PBA regulations to permit the administrator and the Financial Services Commission of Ontario ... to apply other options in the 'loss of sponsor' scenario which will provide more benefits to Nortel pension plan members and others in similar situations, such as the

continuation of the pension plan under responsible financial management by a non-government institution.”

This is a long-time-standing petition, but I received it just recently so I wanted to read it into the record. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

### EPILEPSY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This petition is from Epilepsy Cure Initiative.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas more than 300,000 Canadians have epilepsy, and some of the leading epilepsy organizations in Ontario have already proposed improvements in specialized care for those afflicted with epilepsy, and there is a need for improved access to these programs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Improve access to epilepsy care programs by developing and establishing highly specialized epilepsy treatment centres in Ontario.”

I agree with this and will affix my signature and give it to Oliver to be delivered to the table.

### HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This is to support extending the Ombudsman of Ontario’s jurisdiction to include the Tarion Warranty Corp.

“Whereas homeowners have purchased a newly built home in good faith and often soon find they are victims of construction defects, often including Ontario building code violations, such as faulty heating, ventilation and air conditioning ... systems, leaking roofs, cracked foundations etc.;

“Whereas often when homeowners seek restitution and repairs from the builder and the Tarion Warranty Corp., they encounter an unwieldy bureaucratic system that often fails to compensate them for the high cost of repairing these construction defects, while the builder often escapes with impunity;

“Whereas the Tarion Warranty Corp. is supposed to be an important part of the consumer protection system in Ontario related to newly built homes;

“Whereas the government to date has ignored calls to make its Tarion agency truly accountable to consumers;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, support MPP Cheri DiNovo’s private member’s bill, which calls for the Ombudsman to be given oversight of Tarion and the power to deal with unresolved complaints;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to provide that the Ombudsman’s powers under the Ombudsman Act in respect of any governmental organization apply to the corporation established under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, and to provide for necessary modifications in the application of the Ombudsman Act.”

Of course, I agree with this, signing my name to it and giving it to Braden to be delivered.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

### SMALL BUSINESS BILL OF RIGHTS, 2011

#### CHARTE DES DROITS DES PETITES ENTREPRISES DE 2011

Mrs. Munro moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act to enact a Bill of Rights for small business / Projet de loi 152, Loi édictant une Charte des droits pour les petites entreprises.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Some of the most hard-working and dedicated people I know are small business owners and their families. When you open a small business, you are entirely responsible for its success and its growth. If you have a store and an employee is sick, you have to be there. If an order is coming in, you need to receive it. If your business has closed for the day but there’s work to be done, you stay to do it.

The vitality of small businesses has always impressed me. Starting a small business is not for the faint of heart. It requires enormous energy and self-confidence, as well as significant expertise. You need to be able to plan, you certainly need to work hard, and sometimes you need more than a little bit of luck.

I also find it amazing that even though small business owners work harder than almost anyone else, they are still amongst the most active leaders in our communities. Whether it’s fundraising for worthy projects, sponsoring the local hockey team, organizing the church supper or keeping the chamber of commerce going, small business people seem to be at the heart of almost every local endeavour.

It should be the role of government to encourage this vitality. It’s a resource you cannot pay for, but it is just as valuable as our natural resources education or infrastructure. Yet too often, the actions of government at every level work to sap this vitality. Small business people have to spend more and more time meeting the demands of government regulators and rule makers. Government rules, many of them senseless, cost businesses thousands of dollars a year. And remember: The smaller the business, the more it costs and the more time it takes to meet regulations.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business gives a good statistical background on the problem. They calculate that regulation in Canada costs businesses of all sizes more than \$30 billion per year. What does this

mean for individual small businesses? The latest CFIB red tape report found that the annual regulation cost per employee is \$5,825 for businesses with fewer than five workers. The per employee amount declines for larger businesses so that by the time a business has more than a hundred workers, the per employee cost is \$1,117.

The 2005 data from the CFIB indicates that 55% of all small business owners believe that regulation impedes their ability to compete with larger businesses, and 73% say that regulatory compliance adds significant costs to their lives.

We must remember that in most small businesses, it is the owner who must do most of the work to comply. This means that business people spend less time with their families and more time servicing government.

1340

Shockingly, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business found that 25% of business people would not have gone into business for themselves if they had known the burden of regulation. I'm not saying that we don't need regulation; we just need to minimize regulation and eliminate unnecessary duplication of rules.

The people of Ontario expect the Ontario government to regulate business, but only to the extent necessary to protect human life, human health, the natural environment and the fair treatment of employees, to name a few. While it is necessary for the government to make regulations dealing with business, too often governments pass regulations that harm businesses and damage Ontario's prosperity and economic competitiveness.

What we need is a change in attitude. We need government to start thinking of itself as an enabler of opportunity for small business and citizens. This is the motivation I have to introduce a small business bill of rights for Ontario. If we are to push government to change its attitudes towards business, I think we need to make a statement that binds government in its dealings with our small businesses. Let's have a look at some of the rights that I feel are so important.

(1) The right to operate in a free-market system with as little regulation as is possible and necessary: Only businesses can create jobs and prosperity. Government must stay out of the way as much as possible. Whenever government feels the need to make a rule, the first question should be: Is this necessary? Is this rule based on a need to protect health and safety or any of those other important criteria? Is it based on a scientific assessment of risk and need? Are we duplicating some other part of the law? Will this rule make other things worse or make it unaffordable for a business to operate?

(2) The right to be served promptly and treated with courtesy and respect by all government officials and inspectors: This should be a given. When I first started speaking to stakeholders and small businesses about this bill, one of the first things I started to hear was that they supported what I was doing, but "Please, don't use our names" because they feared they would be targeted by government inspectors. What a sad situation this is, when the reaction of small businesses to the Ontario govern-

ment is one of fear. Small businesses should not be treated as criminals waiting to be caught.

(3) The right to expect the Ontario government and all of its regulatory bodies, inspectors and officials to make the needs of small business a factor in all decisions: It's time to stop writing rules that small businesses cannot reasonably meet and to make small business needs a mandatory factor to consider if a rule is to be written.

(4) The right to expect that all government inspectors will be competent to properly and fairly enforce rules and that any fees charged will reflect only the cost of the inspection: I've heard about both of these concerns from small businesses. Many stakeholder groups actually arrange to train their inspectors in the basics of their individual industries. I think the fee issue is important. Fees should not be used as a tax to fund other activities of regulators.

(5) The right to be consulted by ministries, municipalities and all other bodies empowered by the Ontario government to create rules or regulations that are made or amended and that could affect small business: This is really mandatory. Too often, rules are written without thought being given to their ramifications. We found this when rules were published for the propane industry a year after the Sunrise Propane explosion. Some small propane dealers faced thousands of dollars in new paperwork costs from government to meet the proposed new rules, all of this because government failed to consult, and also because the government failed to base its response to the propane explosion on science and risk assessment. Too many times the government responds to issues with their priority being to get a good headline or to look like they are making a sympathetic gesture. Small businesses end up paying a heavy price for government getting a good headline.

(6) The right to operate on a level playing field with larger businesses in seeking government contracts or participating in government boards, consultations or advisory agencies: Government contracts are getting harder and harder to obtain. Many ministries only want to deal with larger suppliers because it's easier for them. We need to simplify contracts and ensure that small vendors can bid without making the process so expensive that they cannot participate.

(7) The right to a simple, fair and predictable tax system that keeps both tax levels and the cost of preparing and filing tax returns and other required forms to a minimum: The CFIB identified the tax burden as the number one issue for their members.

(8) The right to a well-maintained system of education and infrastructure that meets the needs of small business: another case where small business needs must be taken into account.

(9) The right to a secure and affordable supply of energy: This is vital. Energy is a huge cost, and an unavoidable cost for small business. Costs are rising, and time-of-use pricing doesn't work for many. One of my local pizzeria owners tells me that she would love to use

energy late at night, but she has to cook the pizzas when people want to eat them.

(10) The right to equal treatment by government regardless of where in Ontario the business is located: Rural and northern members should know the importance of this. Small business needs in their communities are different and must be acknowledged.

I urge all members to support my bill. We need to make a statement that we value small business and that we are prepared to change the attitude of governments at all levels to small business. We all know how hard they work. Let's work together to take some of the burden off their shoulders. We have the power to do so.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I commend the member from York-Simcoe for her bill. I'm certainly going to vote for it. There are not a lot of particularly specific recommendations, but certainly the overarching thrust of the bill points to what is absent in this House, and that is really any concern by the government for small business at all, highlighted by the fact that we know longer have a Minister of Small Business. There is no Ministry of Small Business. This was a portfolio removed from cabinet, and certainly the removal of that ministry from cabinet shows the lack of concern and shows the lack of action.

I also mirror her concern. I've heard from many of my small business owners and also from the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas about their horror at the introduction of the HST. They were opposed to it almost uniformly, all 30,000 of their members. They came to Queen's Park hoping to get an audience with the minister to speak about their concerns. No audience was forthcoming. They had a press conference here; no minister attended to address their concerns. They felt very overlooked and very underappreciated, yet these are the engines of our economy: 90% of all jobs in Ontario are small business jobs—90%.

We forget that. The government obviously has forgotten that. Not only the HST is a burden to small business, and as the member pointed out, time-of-use utilities—boy, oh boy, do I hear about that. Think about it. Most stores, most small businesses, operate during the day, at the highest cost times for utilities. Essentially what this government has done with its meters is to tax small business horrendously at a time when they can least afford it.

We have just come through, by everybody's admission, a particularly horrendous dip in the economy. Call it what you will: recession, mini-depression. It has hit small business owners hard. They're suffering. Many of them are hanging on by their fingernails.

1550

In rapid succession we have a government that introduced not only the HST but also time-of-use metered utilities that hit them hardest. It was as if they simply added quite consciously to their burden at the worst

possible time. The member's bill also highlights that reality, and that is a reality for a small business.

You see, what this government tends to overlook—because small businesses don't have the money that big business does. They don't have the money to hire the lobbyists. They don't have the money to hire the accountants and the lawyers. They don't have the money for offshore accounts where they can squirrel their money away. They don't have the money to fight the government at every turn and to end up paying no taxes no matter how much of a break on taxes they get. Small business is extremely exposed to any kind of regulatory change. Small business is extremely exposed to hikes in the taxation system. They don't have ways of manoeuvring about it and around it the way that big business does. They're not the same beast, and you can't treat them the same way.

This government crows about its tax incentives, the billions that it has given away—instead of investing in social programs and other things—to big business, making ours, I think ashamedly so, one of the lowest tax rates charged to big business in North America, at a time when most small business is suffering. Somehow they think that this is going to trickle down and help the corner store. It doesn't. In fact, it hurts the corner store. Why? Because their direct competition is the mall. Main Street's competition is the mall. If we look at our Main Streets and we look at what's happening there, they are emptying out and suffering because the mall is profiting.

Who is the business in the mall? Multinational big corporations, many of them. That's who's in the mall, that's who this government listens to, and that's who is getting the tax breaks. It's not the small business. Everything this government does is designed to help the big guy and hurt the little guy.

We saw an extremely alarming example of this a couple of years back with the butcher shops. We saw ma-and-pa butcher shops being driven out of business by this government because of their ridiculous legislation and regulation. The Toronto Board of Health had passed them. One in my riding had been found fine by the Toronto Board of Health for 40 years. But, no, under this government's jurisdiction, they were then required to spend an extra \$200,000 to meet some imposition of a new regulation by the McGuinty government. It boggles the mind. It literally drove many of my ma-and-pa butchers out of business.

Remember, their concern is about health. It wasn't small business that raised those concerns about listeria and other problems with meat processing; it was big business. It was Maple Leaf Foods—big business that contributed to the Liberal Party. Yet they get the breaks and small business gets turfed. That's the reaction over and over and over again. Whether it's pharmacists, butcher shops—you name the industry—small business, this McGuinty government is not your friend.

And they know it. They speak to us continuously about it. They came to me when I was first elected and asked about the business education tax, a totally unfair

tax system levied upon small business by this government. Those who are in the 416 area pay more than those in the 905 area—same education system. Why is that? It makes no sense. I asked for this government to look into that. I put a motion on the order table about it. They made some small, slight adjustment. As one of my small businesses said, it saved them about \$10 a month. Whoop-de-do.

Meanwhile, they're being hurt by the HST slamming on their customers. They're being hurt by time-of-day-usage utility bills. They're not getting the breaks that the big business gets—none of them whatsoever.

I certainly want to send a shout-out to the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas and all of the business improvement areas. They actually started in my riding. Bloor West Business Improvement Area association started some 40 years ago and was the first in the world. It spread everywhere. It's certainly a help for small business. It brings them together to speak with one voice, which is extremely important, especially when dealing with this current government. Yet it's only effective when the government listens. It's only effective when the government hears what they have to say.

Again, hurting small businesses are not the people who are buying \$10,000-a-seat chairs at Dalton McGuinty's fundraisers—the Premier of the province. They're not the ones paying for those; they're the ones who are working not only from 9 to 5 but 7 in the morning till 10 o'clock at night just to keep their businesses going.

I know whereof I speak because, in fact, I had a small business, and now my children, both of them, run two independent small businesses. Are they hurt by red tape and bureaucracy? Oh yes, they are. It's a nightmare. They have to spend a good portion of their time—and remember, small business start-ups don't have a lot of spare time—complying with ridiculous, out-of-date regulations. They're hurt by the moves that this government has made—HST, utilities—and not helped by them whatsoever. God bless somebody who's trying to start a small business in this economy. God bless them, because certainly they're getting no help from Queen's Park these days.

Here's an interesting thought: If this government really wanted to help small business—I know that at one point in Ontario, there was a time to get a revolving loan, a kind of microloan program that would give a small amount of money, I think it was \$5,000 at the time, to help a small business get on its feet when maybe a bank or some other financial institution would not help—and let's face it: Banks have not been, traditionally, the friends of small business either. They got on their feet and paid back the loan. There's nothing like that forthcoming from this government. There's nothing to help those of our young folk who can't find jobs—because there aren't many jobs in the new Ontario; we've lost, what is it, 250,000 of them—as they may go out and want to start a small business. Can't we help them there? No; no help for you from this government, but, yes, a lot of hindrance.

To get back to this bill: It's a very general bill. It's a bill that points—quite vividly so—to the inadequacy of the McGuinty government's reaction and action—lack of it—for small business in the province of Ontario. It highlights, as should a private member's public business bill, a problem that needs redress. I would suggest to the government that if they're interested in at least symbolically giving a nod to small business, they bring it back as a portfolio, for starters. How outrageous is it that we have no portfolio for small business? Bring it back, put a minister in charge of it, and let's get going. Let's look at what you've done in the past, which has been hurtful; let's meet with small business leaders—not big business leaders; small business leaders. They may not be able to make the contributions to political parties that big business leaders can, but, boy, they vote—and they vote in our communities, unlike the CEOs of the big businesses, who are in the Turks and Caicos, or Geneva, or wherever they live. These small business folk live in our ridings. They speak to our constituents, and here's what they're saying. They're saying over and over again the same messages this government fails to hear, and it reflects in the polls. They're saying that the HST hurts small business; time-of-use metering hurts small business; the business education tax, the way it's in force, and other taxes hurt small business; and there is nothing to help small business.

It was small business, in fact, that supported me on the \$10 minimum wage bill when that first was an issue, way back when. That's not their issue; it's big business's issue. When you've got three, four, five or six employees, it's not a big part of your operating budget, and most of them treat their employees like family and treat them well. That's in the vernacular of small business. That wasn't their issue. Regulation was their issue. Unfair taxation was their issue. Utility costs were their issue. HST hurting their business period was their issue, and the ongoing pressure from the malls. That's their issue, and they get a government that helps the mall and hurts Main Street.

Absolutely, I'm supporting this. New Democrats support anything that will help small business, and call on the government to maybe, just once, think before they act and think from the perspective of someone who has a small business in their riding rather than the large multinational at the mall. If they did, we would get very, very different regulation.

So I hope this bill helps. I hope it raises awareness—whatever the government decides to do with it. I hope that those watching understand the predicament of those people where they shop, those people they do business with every day, those people who really sustain their communities and really hire their children. Let's hope this government listens.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

1400

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I am very pleased to speak to this bill.

Many, many years ago, I was the chairman of the small business committee of a local chamber of commerce. In that capacity—and I did that for a few years—I learned of the trials and tribulations and the great contributions that small business makes to our communities, our province and our country. Since I was elected in 2003, representing Willowdale, I have had a chance to renew that experience that small business has, particularly in Willowdale. There are many small businesses there and many small immigrant businesses.

I've had an opportunity to review the proposed bill, and I think there is much in that bill that warrants respect and action.

I'm just reviewing the first page of the bill: "The people of Ontario recognize that business and, in particular small business, is the foundation of our prosperity and the creation of jobs and wealth in our province." I agree with that, and I support that.

Elsewhere—and I'm just highlighting some of the points here—referring to the province: "It must establish an institutional framework within government to ensure that regulation reduction and reform actually happens." I think that is an admirable goal.

It goes on about the rights of small business:

"2. The right to be served promptly and treated with courtesy and respect by all government officials....

"6. The right to operate on a level playing field with larger businesses in seeking government contracts or participating in government boards, consultations or advisory agencies....

"8. The right to a well-maintained system of education and infrastructure that meets the needs of small businesses.

"9. The right to a secure and affordable supply of energy.

"10. The right to equal treatment by government regardless of where in Ontario the business is located."

I can say to the member opposite that I support the intent and ambition of this bill. Let me go on to say that, in fact, our government is very supportive and has been very supportive of those goals over the last year.

I just want to make a couple of comments regarding things we've done with respect to tax cuts, efforts on our part to reduce business costs, and perhaps something about our Open for Business strategy, because those strategies and those things that our government has been doing since we have formed the government are really in line with the bill of the member opposite. It's for that reason that I'm happy to speak in favour of the bill.

We have been, and we are, providing a billion dollars in tax relief to small businesses over three years, including:

—cutting the small business corporate tax rate to 4.5% from 5%;

—eliminating the small business deduction surtax;

—cutting the corporate minimum tax to 2.7% from 4% in 2010, and exempting more small and medium-sized businesses from the corporate minimum tax;

—providing enhanced refundable tax credits so that small businesses can hire apprentices and co-op students; and

—extending the refundable Ontario innovation tax credit to more small and medium-sized businesses.

This is a point that I expect I'll hear a howl about from across the way, but the reality is that small businesses benefit from the HST, which changes our tax structure to lower the input costs of small businesses.

Together, the tax cuts that I've just touched on and the HST will reduce the tax burden for small business investments by more than half, from almost 29% in 2009 to just over 13% in 2010.

Let me just say a couple of words about some other things that we're in fact doing that this bill of the member opposite complements.

Reduce business costs: I'm very pleased with the efforts that we've made to help businesses, and particularly small and medium-sized businesses, reduce their cost structure. Businesses can now claim 8% in input tax credits on business purchases and capital investments that were previously taxed under the PST. Businesses will save from the elimination of the embedded tax in the supplier prices because of the HST initiatives. All told, the best advice we have is that we have eliminated \$4.6 billion in hidden taxes. We've also provided one-time transition costs to help small businesses adapt their point-of-sale and accounting systems for the HST. Approximately 800,000 businesses have qualified for this support.

You see, the initiatives of the government in the years since I've been a member of this government, since 2003, do have the needs and the ambitions in mind and are dealing with and helping to deal with the frustrations that small businesses often incur. This bill reinforces many of those initiatives of ours, and I'm happy to support the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to support this bill introduced by my colleague the member from York-Simcoe, and I want to commend her for her hard work on behalf of her constituents and Ontario's small businesses.

Having owned and operated a small feed business for many years, I know that often small business people are not only the CEO, they are the sales department, the accounting department and, in my case, the chief mechanic. Small businesses simply don't have time to deal with unnecessary paperwork and regulations, and that's why this bill is so necessary.

The McGuinty government claimed they were trying to address this problem through the Open for Business initiative, as we just heard across the way, but that's not so. Earlier today, I raised a concern that an internal document produced by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs shows that the government is actually hiding red tape, not cutting it. What did the Minister of Economic Development and Trade do in response? Did

she commit to look into it? No. Did she commit to investigate it? No. No, she accused me of making up the document. I have the document here, and unfortunately for the people and businesses of Ontario, the document is real. That is exactly what they intend to do with it.

I'd like to share just a few of the ways that it recommends hiding the regulations and the burdens. It says, "Forms were not included in the count, per Open for Business. Rather than stating within a regulation that a stakeholder must submit his name, address and phone number (three requirements), simply state that the stakeholder must complete the form (one requirement). That form could then require the name, address and phone number."

The document goes on and says, "If a regulation requires an annual report to be prepared and submitted, that counts as two burdens. However, if the requirement to be prepared was removed, then only one burden would remain."

Later in the document it says, "If a policy or procedure manual were changed to a training manual, perhaps it could be argued that it is no longer a requirement."

Ontarians aren't that easily duped. They know that moving the requirements to another place or renaming them doesn't eliminate them. It demonstrates just how far out of touch this government has become, that they believe it is more important to pull the wool over people's eyes than to actually cut red tape and help farmers and small businesses to succeed.

Last week, during a speech at the Ontario Cattlemen's Association annual general meeting, Ontario PC leader Tim Hudak reiterated his commitment to peel back the growing red tape burden and the crippling tax system that hurts Ontario's farmers.

I think it is particularly appropriate that we are talking about helping small business and cutting red tape today, because this is the first day the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario seminar series entitled Enough Is Enough is starting. According to the flyer, this series was created because "Ontario's farmers are fed up with the heavily regulated business environment in which they operate." I want to commend them for creating the seminars to help farmers because, unfortunately, this government seems more concerned with a public relations exercise than actually taking action.

1410

I wish that instead they would listen to people like Henry Stevens, the president of the Christian Farmers Federation, who said, "Ontario's farmers are fed up with the uncompetitive situation in which they find themselves trying to do business." I know that many businesses feel the same way. That's why I believe this bill is so important.

I want to thank again, personally, my colleague from York-Simcoe for bringing it forward at this time so we can actually get something done about getting rid of that parcel of red tape that's inhibiting the growth of our small business community.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm delighted to stand up in my place to speak about the bill that was introduced by the member from York-Simcoe.

The title is a beautiful title, but I don't know. I read the bill in detail. I didn't see something important to change or to endorse, even though I'm supporting the title because I believe strongly on this side of the House in small businesses across the province of Ontario because they play a pivotal role in our communities.

I was a small business owner before I got elected in 2003, and I know that more than 400,000 small and medium businesses in the province run more than 99% of the total business we have in Ontario. They employ more than two million people across this province. I believe that small and medium businesses are the centre and the core of our financial economy in this province. That's why all of us shouldn't take a side or politicize this issue, because it's important for all of us to support the small and medium businesses in Ontario to keep the economy going. Mostly, in this province of Ontario, families and small organizations open a small business to provide for themselves, for their families and also for Ontario in general. That's why it's our duty and obligation to support small business people in the province. That's why the HST came: to eliminate the input tax, lower it and give them a chance to make it easy for them to operate and do business in Ontario.

I heard the Conservative members opposite talking about red tape. I'm not sure if they mean by "red tape" to fire all of the inspectors in the province of Ontario. I think of what happened in Walkerton. Everybody knows what happened with the meat inspectors, especially at Aylmer Meat Packers: Many people were eating dead-stock instead of eating fresh and healthy meat. The elimination of inspectors in the province, or what they call red tape, put the health of the people of Ontario in jeopardy. That's why we have to create that balance. Government regulations should be in place to protect the people and also to allow the small businesses of Ontario to operate in a professional manner. In that way we can protect the economy and also the people of Ontario.

It's important for us on this side, in this government, to make sure all the people of Ontario have a great and successful business because, as I mentioned, the small and medium businesses in Ontario represent more than 99% of the total business we have in the province. As I said at the beginning, I was involved in a small business. My family is still involved in the small business. We want the regulations to be in place to protect against illegal activities in the business community, to protect the hard-working people of Ontario and also to prohibit all the fly-by-night operators from blocking the system and destroying the business of others.

Also, I listened to the NDP speaking, and I'm not sure what they have against business. They think that if a person has a huge business, it's anti-people. I'm not sure about this. Businesses in general—small, medium,

large—create business for the people of Ontario, they create jobs for Ontario, they pay taxes, they support our health care, they support our education system, and they support all the elements we have.

I heard you talking about the education business tax. I believe our government acted in this area and is phasing out all of the education tax by the year 2012—I hope the member remembered that—to allow the small business people to operate and have more profit.

My colleague mentioned a few minutes ago how much importance the HST has for small business. Instead of duplication of taxes, we have a one-tax system.

Also, we help them out in terms of hydro energy, as she was talking about. We have a reduction of about 10% for all the businesses across the province of Ontario. Also, we give them some kind of financial support, such as when we implemented the HST to give small businesses the ability to continue to do business in Ontario, to be profitable and to be able to continue to support themselves and their families.

So I'm puzzled by the whole request when we talk about red tape, which means eliminating all inspectors, or about keeping it open—no jurisdictions, no regulations. I'm not sure what they're looking for.

In general, as I mentioned, I'm supporting the title. It's a beautiful title: rights for small business. I was a small business person, and my family is still in a small business operation. I support the title.

Hopefully, all of us will work together to create a good environment for small and medium-sized businesses in the province of Ontario, because of our obligation to protect them and to create an environment for them to be prosperous and able to continue to provide for all of us in Ontario.

Thank you for allowing me to stand up and speak and give my comments on this bill. In general, I'm not going to go against the title and against small business, because I believe in that too.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm really pleased to join this debate today. I want to particularly congratulate the member for York-Simcoe on introducing what I know is an outstanding piece of legislation.

She is our caucus critic for red tape. In this role, over and over again, I have seen her showing her commitment to assisting Ontario's small and medium-sized enterprises in their fight against what has become an unending onslaught of new Liberal rules and regulations—in other words, red tape.

I commend her for introducing this bill. I commend her for her constant hard work and her advocacy on behalf of small business.

I also want to put on the record the fact that not only is she a tireless advocate for small business in the province of Ontario; she also enjoys, within her own riding, a very well-deserved reputation as a tireless advocate for the constituents she serves. Every time I meet somebody from her riding, I am told again how hard she works on

their behalf, not just in her constituency but also to bring their views to Queen's Park.

Congratulations to the member for York-Simcoe.

I think all of us on this side of the House meet with small business owners on a regular basis. During that time, and more recently, again, they have brought to our attention the fact that it's pretty hard to remain competitive when you operate a business in the province of Ontario. They've brought to our attention many concerns, which this member is now trying to address.

I just want to remind this House that our government has always had an unwavering commitment to help small business operate, to make it easier to be competitive and, obviously, to create new jobs and pay the taxes that are going to support our schools, our health and safety, and the environment.

In fact, in the past, I am proud to say that our government did pass 15 red tape reduction and government efficiency acts. These acts repealed over 80 outdated statutes and amended well over 200 acts.

We always have had a reputation of working side by side with small business in the province of Ontario and being responsive to the concerns that they have brought forward. We recognize how important it is for them to be competitive, more productive and more efficient.

In the past, we had the Red Tape Commission, and it worked very hard. I think we've already heard that it was so successful that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business recommended establishing a red tape commission at the federal level as well, following the example set by the Ontario PC government. So we have much to be proud of.

But times are becoming difficult, and despite the promises that the Liberals did make in 2003, saying that they would convert the Red Tape Commission to make it an agency specifically devoted to meeting the needs of small business, according to small business in the province, that simply hasn't happened. There seems to have been a lack of a grasp of the vital importance that small business plays in this province.

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There was an excellent example that was brought to my attention recently. Representatives from the Ontario Printing and Imaging Association came in to meet with us in our office to discuss the issues affecting their industry. Every single person said that their concerns related specifically to red tape. They indicated that they were completely hampered in their ability to conduct business by this government's refusal to consider the burden it imposed upon Ontario small businesses. One gentleman said he had been forced to wait 18 months to receive his noise approval certificate. This comes at a great cost to his bottom line and has resulted in many lost hours of production. It is these unnecessary regulations, which are having dire consequences for our economy, that we must work to remove.

That's why the bill before us today, entrenching the rights of small business officially in law, is so critically important. The bill will officially recognize the role small

business plays in our province. Our colleague has brought forward a concise and straightforward bill to protect the economy, and if it is passed, which I hope it will be, it will serve as a gentle yet constant reminder to government and bureaucrats that they must at all times consider the impacts of their actions on small businesses. This bill makes good sense.

I commend the member for York-Simcoe for bringing this bill forward, for striving to entrench in law the same principles the Red Tape Commission exemplified in their quest to strengthen Ontario's economy. This bill is straightforward. I know my colleague has done a lot of consultation, and it has been very, very well received by those individuals with whom she has consulted. They're looking forward to passage of the bill today.

This bill will require an annual report from each ministry: details of any reduction in red tape and future plans to reduce the burden. That's important.

Finally, and in conclusion, I simply want to say that this bill that has been brought forward is a message to the people of Ontario. It's a message to small business owners, to aspiring entrepreneurs, to employers and to employees that we take your livelihood and your prosperity seriously. It is, as a result of that, that we in this House want to provide the heart and soul of Ontario's economy with a bill of rights that the people in this province so desperately need at the current time, and deserve.

I would encourage everyone in this House to support the bill that has been put forward by my colleague.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for York-Simcoe, Mrs. Munro, has two minutes for her response.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you to all the members who added to the debate today. I want to recognize the members for Parkdale-High Park, Willowdale, Oxford, London-Fanshawe and Kitchener-Waterloo.

In the time I have, I'd like to suggest that the member for London-Fanshawe needs to get out a bit more and talk to some of the small businesses in his own community.

I specifically talked about protecting human life, human health, the natural environment and so forth to make it clear to everyone that of course we don't look at this as an onslaught of getting rid of regulation. We understand the importance of consumer protection; we understand the importance of a level playing field and that there's consumer confidence in products and services. To suggest anything else is totally irresponsible.

What is, however, important to note is that where a few years ago one page was required to fill in a form, it has now grown into a binder, it now requires a third party endorsement and it now costs \$5,000. That's the kind of thing, the proliferation, that we're talking about.

We know that there are business people who have to look after rules and regulations with regard to liquor, tobacco, the lottery. Several ministries may all descend on their business on the same day. It could be health,

labour, the Ministry of the Environment, finance—and the list goes on. The responsibility in compliance, then, for many pieces of legislation affects so many in this most important part of our economy.

Small business is the engine of our economy. It's the place where young people frequently get their first jobs. It's where local prosperity is instigated. So I would want to add my voice to that which the member for Kitchener-Waterloo said a moment ago: that we as a party understand these challenges and we want to make sure that all aspiring entrepreneurs can enjoy the fruits of their labour in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time for Mrs. Munro's ballot item has expired. We'll vote on the ballot item in about 100 minutes.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Speaker, can I ask you—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Could we have a quorum call? Because the member is not here.

**Interjection:** There's lots.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Your member is not here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** A quorum has been called.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** A quorum is present.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I just want to ask, with the indulgence of the House, if Mr. Zimmer would be prepared to proceed with his ballot item at this time?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm sorry, Speaker, I didn't—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Would you be willing to proceed with your ballot item at this time? We're waiting for Mr. Kwinter, who isn't here.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Could we just recess for a minute while I get my papers organized here?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We're going to suspend the House for a few minutes and wait for Mr. Kwinter. The time that we are suspended, up to 12 minutes, will come out of Mr. Kwinter's presentation time. So we're suspended for up to 12 minutes.

*The House suspended proceedings from 1428 to 1429.*

**Mr. Dave Levac:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Let me just call the House back to order.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent for Mr. Kwinter's time to be included completely, the 12 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Unfortunately, I respect your request, but the rules are pretty strict on Thursday afternoons, and we can't do that.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** We would agree.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Unfortunately, we can't change the rules. They're cast in stone when it's private members' time. If we were in regular Parliament, unanimous consent could do it.

I would now move on to ballot item number 65.

ONTARIO SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL  
ENGINEERS ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR L'ASSOCIATION  
DES INGÉNIEURS DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Kwinter moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers / Projet de loi 148, Loi concernant l'Association des ingénieurs de l'Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Just over a decade ago, Ontario's professional engineers took a hard look at their profession and saw the importance of separating licensure and regulation from advocacy and member services. That is why, in 2000, professional engineers in this province created the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, or OSPE.

Today I would like to discuss Bill 148, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. This private member's bill, which I introduced to the Legislature on December 8, 2010, is designed to solidify the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers' position as the advocacy member service body for engineers in Ontario. The bill proposes to formally incorporate OSPE with the statutory authority provided by legislation as the advocacy and member services organization for Ontario's 73,000 licensed engineers. The bill, if passed, will define the mandate and objects that OSPE is to undertake and, in addition, provide for structure and governance of the society in legislation.

The bill does not affect the authority of the PEO, nor does it make any changes in this regard. Its intent is to solidify current arrangements. The bill does not affect OSPE's current structure, mandate or bylaws, and OSPE will continue as a corporation without share capital.

Like other major professions in this province, engineers are self-regulated. Since 1922, engineers have been licensed and regulated by Professional Engineers Ontario. Professional Engineers Ontario is a body that protects the public by ensuring that people who call themselves professional engineers meet specific professional standards. Much the way doctors must pass medical exams and lawyers must pass the bar, engineers must pass exams and live up to strict standards in order to practise engineering and to put "P.Eng." after their name. Indeed, most public-facing professions in this province have regulatory bodies that operate to protect the public interest. Such organizations typically develop standards of professional practice, enforce regulations through licensing and disciplinary processes, and allow the public to launch complaints.

Many professions also have a member interest body, which, as the name suggests, is dedicated to looking after the welfare and concerns of its members. This type of organization is not involved in setting standards of practice or qualification, but rather acts to promote the

interests of its members in the eyes of the public, the government and the profession itself. In the medical field, for example, the College of Physicians and Surgeons protects the public interest, granting licences and carrying out disciplinary actions where needed. The interests of doctors are looked after by the Ontario Medical Association, which lobbies government and speaks to the public on behalf of the profession. Within the legal profession, the Law Society of Upper Canada sets standards for the practice of law and suspends lawyers for unethical practice, and the Ontario Bar Association speaks out on behalf of the profession and also provides member services like workshops and training for lawyers. Both the OMA and the OBA are long-standing organizations, and the public is aware of the distinct role of each.

Since the year 2000, with the creation of OSPE, the engineering profession has followed the same model. Professional Engineers Ontario regulates; the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers advocates. Over the past decade, OSPE has played an important role within the engineering profession and also within the public dialogue.

Shortly after OSPE was formed, the organization conducted research asking the public to note which professions they respected the most. Engineers were the third-most-respected profession in Ontario, behind only doctors and pharmacists. But when OSPE asked the same people, "What is it that engineers do?" they were more uncertain. This lack of public awareness was hurting Ontario. It meant engineers were not as influential as they needed to be when it came to sharing their input on important policy decisions that affect the well-being of all Ontarians.

Here in Ontario, we enjoy an exceptional quality of life. We boast vibrant world-class cities. We benefit from exceptional health care. We enjoy clean, safe drinking water. We are creating thousands of jobs and helping to put Canada on the global map through our innovations in biotechnology, green energy and other knowledge-based sectors. None of this would be possible without the work of engineers. Yes, engineers design state-of-the-art buildings, roads and bridges, but they do so much more. Indeed, our economic strength as a province is directly related to the work that engineers do every day.

This is not just an esoteric discussion of what happens in our labs and manufacturing plants. Hundreds of things that the average person touches in the run of a day are the products of engineering, from the food we eat to the vehicles we drive, from the electricity we use to the myriad devices that we rely on to keep us connected. Engineers make our society run.

The fact that the public does not know how important engineers are has been a challenge for this profession for some time. And it is one of the main reasons why OSPE was created. Engineers know how important their work is, but they must work hard to share that knowledge with the rest of Ontario.

OSPE speaks out on behalf of engineers to governments, to engineering stakeholders, to the public and

within the profession itself. OSPE's role is to listen to the concerns of professional engineers and to advocate on their behalf.

First, the society advocates on behalf of the profession, helping to promote awareness of the tremendous value that engineers bring to society. OSPE works with governments and industry to ensure that the voice of engineers is heard when policies are made and legislation is drafted. It speaks out about the concerns of the profession to the public to make them aware of the importance of the work engineers do. OSPE builds community, and it engages engineers in their profession and professional issues through speaking events, leadership and ongoing communications.

In its short history, OSPE has made significant progress. Following the tragic events in Walkerton, OSPE advocated for changes to the Safe Drinking Water Act. The act now requires a licensed engineer to sign off on drinking water systems, ensuring greater safety and accountability for the people of Ontario. When the provincial government considered removing calculus from the Ontario high school curriculum, it was OSPE that lobbied to keep it in, ensuring that students would have the tools needed to pursue further studies in the types of technologies that represent a substantial part of Ontario's economic future.

More recently, OSPE has become one of the lead voices encouraging our federal government to maintain its commitment to nuclear power, a commitment that will protect knowledge jobs and secure Canada's position as a global innovator in this sector. Currently OSPE has been working with our Ministry of Infrastructure, delivering extensive and valued counsel on the development of Ontario's bold 10-year infrastructure plan. These are activities that have and will continue to deliver immeasurable benefits to the people of Ontario, and they are activities that can only be undertaken effectively by a body dedicated solely to advocacy.

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Besides advocacy, OSPE also provides important member services. OSPE publishes research and shares information pertinent to the profession, including fee schedules, salary benchmarking and policy recommendations on a range of subjects from infrastructure to energy. OSPE provides job listings and career planning tools for engineering graduates, for professional engineers looking to make a career transition and for engineers who are newcomers to Canada.

OSPE also provides Ontario's engineering community with valuable opportunities for ongoing professional development, which include technical learning, management workshops and specific courses designed to help engineering graduates pursue the path of licensure and professional practice.

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers is a unifying organization that acts as a powerful voice for engineers. It is a body that builds community and raises awareness among all Ontarians of the vital contributions that engineers make. The regulator, PEO, can only advo-

cate within the framework of self-regulation. A separate and distinct body with the freedom to dedicate itself to the full scope of advocacy and empowered by legislation will ensure that the voice of professional engineers can be heard on a full spectrum of issues. This legislation is necessary to help policymakers and the public hear the voice of engineers loudly and clearly. I would ask that we get the support of all members of this Legislature to make this happen.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I want to indicate to my good friend Mr. Kwinter my support for his legislation today.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I am a proud professional engineer in the province of Ontario, one of 73,000 engineers we have in this province. Of interest is the fact that the engineering profession is the single largest professional group in the province of Ontario by a long shot. I think there are something like 20,000 or 25,000 physicians—medical doctors. You can go on to any other kind of profession, and engineers outstrip other professions by two or three to one. Thank goodness for that, because engineers create wealth. Engineers from across Ontario—we have a proud engineering profession in this province—create a lot of wealth for our province. They are in the innovation business, they are in the implementation business and they are in the business business.

I was very, very happy when, prior to 2000, the engineering profession started to look at advocacy, because I felt that the regulating body, the Professional Engineers of Ontario as they were then and are now, were not adequately representing to the public the wonderful contributions our engineers make to our province.

Engineers from Ontario are known all over the world. We have engineers who go to different countries around the world as consultants, not only to design but to build projects, to advise industries all around the world on how to do things as we have been trained to in this province.

I might add that of all professions, engineers probably were the first profession to embrace new Canadians, immigrants coming to our country who wanted to practise the profession they had learned in another country. They have worked very, very hard to modify their entrance qualifications to become professional engineers, and they have been very successful at bringing many, many new Canadians into the engineering profession in our province. It is an under-known fact that they were leading in terms of inviting new Canadians who were properly qualified to be recognized as engineers in the province of Ontario.

Notwithstanding that we have the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, which does the advocacy part and provides member services to engineers, I still feel that engineers don't toot their horn enough. I often say this when I speak to them from time to time. In my view, they should become much more vocal in political issues. When an environmental issue comes up, I believe they should be commenting on it in the press. I think that they

should be taking the advocacy role to a higher level than it presently is. I think they should be involved in environmental policies that are developed by government. I think they should be out there saying whether or not they believe that the government has done its homework in terms of the background in developing those policies. I think they should question us from time to time as to what we do in this place in terms of making scientific or engineering decisions in our policy decisions, and I have encouraged them from time to time to do that, as we go forward.

This bill, as explained to me by Danny Young, the president of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, really takes the existing bylaws which they have and codifies them into a statute. The society and President Young feel that this will enhance their opportunity to go forward as an advocacy group for the engineers. I believe that the legislation that my friend has proposed should, in fact, pass and should receive third reading as well in the not-too-far-distant future.

I believe that more young people would be attracted into the engineering profession. If we had many, many more engineers in the province of Ontario who were involved in innovating, creating new science, new ways of building things and new ways of inventing new processes, our economy would grow stronger as we go forward. So I think that the advocacy within the engineering profession is really key to not only the professional group themselves but to the overall economy of our province.

As I said in my opening remarks, I'm proud to be an engineer. I was trained as an engineer before I went on to further studies. When I walk down the street campaigning during the campaign, somebody will say, "What did you do before you were involved in politics?" Sometimes I don't tell them that I practised law. Most times I tell them I was an engineer.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Wise choice.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** And you know what? I think they like the engineer a little bit more than the fact that I practised law as well. I'm proud of both professions, but I have a long string of engineering in my family. My brother's an engineer, my brother-in-law—it goes on and on. I think it runs in the bloodlines.

As I say, I can't be prouder to be an engineer and I urge everybody to support Mr. Kwinter and his bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** This is an easy bill, and it makes it easy because the member from York Centre is such a fine person and a fine Liberal. He's one of the few Liberals I like.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** There are a few.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** You're quite right. You see, when you say "a few," then people start counting, right? That's true. Holy cow, how many hands have we got?

No, you're quite right, Linda, you're right. Linda is one of my favourites too, and the good doctor behind me. There are so many good people here.

It's just an easy bill, and there are times—I like engineers. I do. On the whole, they're good people.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Even Conservatives?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Exactly. Even my good friend from Carleton—Mississippi Mills. I like him too, as a Conservative and as an engineer.

There are times when you can speak on a bill for a long, long time. This is not one of them. This isn't one of them, because it's simple.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Make it up.

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**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** And it's hard to make it up.

In the year 2000, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers was created, which has the advocacy function, and the Professional Engineers Ontario have the member services function, and it has been going like that since the year 2000. It's an informal relationship that they've got. They seem to like the functions that both the respective organizations have and they now want to formalize it, make it statutory. God bless. I think it's okay. And I think the member from Parkdale—High Park believes it's okay. She did, in fact, tell me she has a brother who's an engineer. She likes him, and I'd probably like him, too. So I just want to say briefly that the member from Parkdale—High Park supports it. I support it. It's an easy bill to support. Let's get on with it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'm pleased today to express my support for Bill 148, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. I'm really glad that my colleague from York Centre, Mr. Monte Kwinter, has brought this bill to the House. Just to add to it, I have a son, similar to my friend from the PC Party, who is also an engineer but turned lawyer. I think he's proud to be a lawyer more so than an engineer. So there it is.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** He's not in politics, I bet.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** He's out of politics, but you never know where he'll end up.

If Bill 148 is passed, it will provide the much-needed distinction between the regulator of engineers, which is the Professional Engineers Ontario, and the official voice of the engineering profession, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers.

This particular body was created by engineers in co-operation with the regulator, Professional Engineers Ontario. OSPE has a unique mandate to ensure that the expert voice of professional engineers is heard when policy decisions are made, and rightly so; they should be heard, because engineers, as everyone has said, bring us everything that we use, probably eat and wear on a daily basis. They affect our lives. The more we can do to promote the organization and show them that we respect their profession, I think is important.

The particular bill does not change anything that exists today. Professional Engineers Ontario do their job of certification etc., and this particular organization will continue to do what it has been doing since the year 2000, which is to promote and do advocacy work on

behalf of engineers. It respects a 10-year agreement between the two organizations. As my colleague from Trinity-Spadina just said, all we're doing is putting what I guess is an agreement in principle between the two organizations internally in law, in statute, in the province of Ontario to recognize the two organizations. But as we do that, we help the public in Ontario to recognize the profession in an official way and create that need for this particular organization to receive the respect that they deserve in our community.

As Ontario's population continues to grow, our aging infrastructure is being rebuilt on a daily basis. Things like highways, roads, buildings, drinking water, sewage and power systems are some of the ongoing projects that require new, cost-effective, environmentally friendly alternatives that will ensure Ontario's prosperity and quality of life for decades to come.

Currently, our government is working on the implementation of a 10-year plan for infrastructure renewal and development. Professional engineers in our province will play an increasingly indispensable role in conceiving, developing and managing infrastructure projects and ensuring that our government delivers what the public needs. Increasing emphasis on these priorities creates a significant window to highlight the importance of engineers to the growth and well-being of our province. As the advocacy body representing 73,000 professional engineers in Ontario, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers has been front and centre on infrastructure for more than a decade.

In October 2010, as part of the Construction and Design Alliance of Ontario, OSPE offered extensive recommendations on policies and priorities for consideration within the province's 10-year plan. They are doing so in order to help advance the province's infrastructure development agenda, while at the same time seeking to maximize job creation, boost prosperity and ensure that Ontario taxpayers realize the best value for their hard-earned dollars with the best standards that are available.

OSPE is continuing to work with the Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure to offer advice and expertise that will yield value for Ontarians. While the regulator is PEO, OSPE does their job of advocacy and will continue to do so.

I'm happy to support my colleague on the other side and support this piece of legislation, and I hope everyone else does so.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's a pleasure to stand and support the bill of the member from York Centre and to reiterate some of the comments that were made.

In introducing the bill, the member for York Centre talked about how engineers were responsible for the development of so many things in our society: cars, roads, a lot of things that make our lives easier. I suppose they're also responsible for the creation of BlackBerrys, those umbilical cords that hold us to our office and hold us to our work no matter where we go. No matter where

we try to escape, we're always brought back by some engineer who developed the BlackBerry and brought it into our society. I'm not sure whether those are always a good thing or not, but nonetheless they're there. If we got little time off before, we get no time off now. So thank you very much to the engineers for that aspect of it.

The member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills pointed out that he was an engineer. One day, someone questioned whether or not he was an engineer. It was pointed out that on the corner of the national art gallery in Ottawa—I believe it's the southeast corner—where the cornerstone was laid, on the etchings on that cornerstone is named one Norman Sterling. So it was assumed that he might have had an engineering degree in order to achieve getting his name placed on that cornerstone. Is that story correct, Mr. Sterling?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** It's close.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's close, he says.

So I guess we have to thank engineers for those things.

I know that there is a direct relationship—those comments might have been in jest, but this is very serious—between the number of graduating engineers in a society and therefore the number of engineers who work within that society and the standard of living that society enjoys. Ontario has, as was pointed out, a very large number of engineers, and we have a very high standard of living. In fact, I'm told that the average person in Ontario lives in the top two percentile of the world's population. If you think about that, that's a very chosen spot. I suppose the direct relationship between having a high number of engineers and degrees in science as well, I'd point out, has helped us to achieve that rather unique and coveted place in the world in which we live. We are truly blessed in this province, and the number of engineers and the number of scientists that we have in this province leads very much to that, along with the wonderful post-secondary school education that we have in this society.

I had a lot of trouble understanding what this bill does, and I'm pleased to hear a number of the members say that this bill doesn't change a thing in Ontario, because that's kind of the conclusion I came to. What it does do, I guess, is to elevate or give more credibility to the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, in presenting them with a piece of legislation that is going through this House, recognizing the fact that they do operate in the province.

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They remain a voluntary organization. I think it's very important that the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers is a voluntary organization. Having run a voluntary organization in the past, I think that it's a strong statement as to how well the association does as to the percentage of numbers that they have within their organization. If they provide value to the professional engineers, they will have a high percentage of members in their association. If their value is so-so, they will have a lower number in their association. I understand, although I've been unable to come up with a figure, that the

number of engineers in the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers is very high.

Of course, the Professional Engineers Ontario, the PEO, is a mandatory organization and sets the standards by which engineers operate in this province. I think that's also an extremely important organization, but it's not one that can advocate for engineers. Therein lies the difference, and I think it's an important difference.

I recognize and congratulate the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers for taking on that business of advocating for their profession.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** As a scientist and engineer, and a member of this House, I am particularly interested in issues around the profession of engineering, energy, innovation and the environment and prosperity. In recent years, these are the issues that have been championed by the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, the advocacy body representing more than 73,000 professional engineers across our province.

I am pleased today to voice my support for Bill 148, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. I believe that securing the position of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers through legislation will benefit the people of Ontario, ensuring that both the public and the policy-makers know exactly who speaks on behalf of engineers, whose input has such a paramount and strong impact on Ontario's economy and well-being.

The society's energy task force has a long history of working closely with the Ontario Ministry of Energy, providing invaluable counsel on operational and environmental issues that impact the citizens of this province. The task force also works to build public awareness of the full range of energy options and to help Ontarians make informed choices about energy use and conservation.

In particular, the society has been a leading voice on the restructuring of Atomic Energy of Canada, or AECL, which will have a major impact on the nuclear industry in Canada and in Ontario. Fuelled by concerns about greenhouse gas emissions, nuclear energy is enjoying a global renaissance. Canada is currently not participating in this renaissance because of the uncertainty of AECL's future.

Today, Canada's Candu nuclear infrastructure supports approximately 60,000 direct jobs in Canada. Approximately 18,000 engineering graduates are employed in Canada's nuclear industry.

The nuclear industry is one with deep roots in Ontario. Since the 1960s, nuclear power has been part of Ontario's energy supply, and currently provides more than half of the power used by Ontarians every day. Moreover, many communities thrive because residents are engaged in high-value, knowledge-based jobs within this sector.

The society has emphasized that, if executed well, the restructuring of AECL will provide significant additional

prosperity for local communities such as Pickering, Darlington and Bruce county, which host AECL facilities, as well as other communities where suppliers are located.

Conversely, the society says that if restructuring is done poorly, it could have very severe economic consequences for those local communities. The society and its members have lobbied the federal government to ensure that the restructuring of AECL is undertaken effectively so that the new entity will be financially healthy, commercially successful and will contribute positively to those local communities.

A July 2010 report released by Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters states that "the refurbishment of nuclear facilities at Bruce and Darlington will create 25,000 jobs in the next decade, injecting \$5 billion annually into Ontario's economy."

Bill 148 will help the society to pursue this cause and many others as the official voice of Ontario's professional engineers.

The public is aware that Professional Engineers Ontario—PEO—acts as a licensing and regulating body for professional engineers and is the go-to organization for complaints and disciplinary procedures.

If passed, Bill 148 will tell the people of Ontario that there's another distinct body—the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers—a body that is free to advocate on behalf of professional engineers, a body that ensures that the voice of engineers is heard on vital issues that affect the citizens in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Let's just quickly recap: Bill 148 is a bill that takes those services provided by engineers and divides them into two parts. The existing body, Professional Engineers Ontario, or PEO, retains member services, and it proposes a body called the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers to take on the functions of advocacy.

This is a day in which we celebrate the contributions of engineering. My colleague from Richmond Hill and I both come out of a science background, so today we're going to tell a self-deprecating story about scientists and engineers. The quote is from US novelist James A. Michener, who says, "Scientists dream about doing great thing; engineers do them."

This indeed will be the century of the engineer, in the renewal of housing, telecommunications, infrastructure, power generation, water, manufacturing, environment and transportation. In fact, we can look to our engineers to take us to new heights in IT, clean technology, life sciences and pharma, all needing the cutting-edge skills that our 73,000 engineers bring to the fore.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? Seeing none, the honourable member for York Centre, Mr. Kwinter, has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I want to thank those who participated in the debate: Norm Sterling, the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills; Rosario Marchese from Trinity-Spadina; Bas Balkissoon of Scarborough-Rouge

River; Ted Chudleigh from Halton—I should tell you, Ted, that there are 73,000 engineers in Ontario; Reza Moridi of Richmond Hill; and Bob Delaney of Mississauga–Streetsville.

When I was first approached by the engineers, I thought this would be a very easy thing to do, just by sending this particular bill to the committee on regulations and private bills. I was informed by legislative counsel that it can't happen because we're asking something that the act that provides for the Professional Engineers Ontario prohibits them from advocating on behalf of the engineers. So we had to come forward with a separate bill to do that.

Nobody is objecting to it. Since the year 2000, they have been doing that in conjunction with each other. This just regularizes it so that there's legislation that gives them that authority and allows them to be able to do what they have to do, and that is to promote the best interests of the profession.

You've heard from everyone who has spoken to it that engineers are highly regarded. They are absolutely critical to the economic well-being of this province. By passing this bill—and I hope it will get unanimous consent and proceed quickly to the point where it gets third reading—will give them the opportunity to tell their story, which is a great story, and everybody in Ontario is going to benefit from getting that knowledge so they understand exactly what an engineer does and how much they contribute to society.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time for this ballot item has expired. We will vote on Mr. Kwinter's bill in about 50 minutes.

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## REGISTERED HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LES PROFESSIONNELS EN RESSOURCES HUMAINES INSCRITS

Mr. Zimmer moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 138, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association / Projet de loi 138, Loi concernant l'Association des professionnels en ressources humaines.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm very proud to have brought this private member's bill forward. What I propose to do is to speak for a couple of minutes on the purpose, why I brought the bill forward; a couple of minutes outlining the structure of the bill, how the bill will operate legislatively; and, thirdly, a few comments on the support that this bill has developed throughout the province.

On November 23, 2010, Bill 138 was introduced into the Legislature. The act would replace the existing Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario

Act of 1990. As you are aware, HRPA regulates the human resource profession in Ontario and issues the certified human resources professional designation, which is the national standard of excellence in human resource management.

HRPA is committed to advancing the human resources profession to ensure that HR is a full partner in developing and executing organizational strategy in the creation of equitable workplaces. HRPA members have long sought recognition as true professionals. As business practices, economic conditions, workforce composition and employee expectations all become more complex and interrelated, so have the demands on the professionalism of HRPA.

The function of HR professionals now has many of the aspects of a profession, including a representative professional organization, a published code of ethics and professional conduct, benchmark performance standards to ensure professional competence, skill development requirements and, finally, a growing public perception of HR as a profession as a result of the HRPA's efforts to promote HR's essential strategic role as a critical business partner. It is vital that HRPA members have a vehicle to evolve and deliver credible HR management that will create and foster success in Ontario workplaces. I believe this, and I want to see HRPA and its members evolve into a strong, credible tier-1 profession. This is why I brought forward the private member's bill.

All Ontarians are touched by work. It gives us dignity and purpose. It sustains our families. It creates wealth and growth for the province. But how happy, satisfied and safe we are at work depends largely on how organizations implement the various laws that govern the Ontario workplace. The 20,000 members of the Human Resources Professionals Association, or HRPA, are committed to building fair and equitable workplaces for Ontario workers.

Human resource professionals are the bridge between the employee and the employer, ensuring that both parties are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the province's workplace rules and regulations. One way the association has proven this is by voluntarily adopting FARPA, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, as a schedule 1 signatory as testimony to its commitment to the transparent, objective, impartial and fair employment treatment and career opportunities of all Ontarians.

Individually, when a human resource professional joins the association, they agree to abide by a professional code of conduct that commits them to professional competence, legal requirements, dignity in the workplace, balancing interests between employee and employer, confidentiality, conflict-of-interest resolution and professional growth and support of other professions.

Here's a fact, members, that illustrates the professionalism of HRPA members. Last year, HRPA carried out a small research project into the relationship between HRPA membership and the conviction rate under the Employment Standards Act. Between October 2008 and

January 2010, there were 489 convictions for violations of the act. The essential finding was that of these 489 ESA violations, none could be linked to an HRP member. Although there are many explanations that might explain the findings, it is clear that the presence of HRP members is linked to fewer workplace issues.

This study is compelling evidence that the regulation of HR professionals is clearly in the public interest, and there's plenty of additional evidence that points to the need for more robust regulation of the human resources profession. Although human resources professionals are employed by organizations, their actions impact all employees. Employees can't choose the HR practitioner they deal with, and there is an imbalance of power between HR professionals and employees. From this perspective, there is simply too much risk for the public good for HR professionals not to be regulated.

For instance, consider confidentiality. Compared to any other professional group in organizations, including accountants and so on, HR professionals have more access to confidential and very personal information about the employee—and the employer, in addition. They know who's on stress leave. They know who's battling an addiction and who's dealing with health issues. We count on their confidentiality to keep personal employee matters private.

As professionals who oversee compensation, there's also a financial impact from an HR practitioner's choices. Given that salaries are usually the biggest line items in an organization's budget, given all the evidence that shows that HR practices have a big impact on an organization's bottom line, an incompetent or an unethical HR professional can do just as much, if not more, financial damage to an organization as a CA, a CGA, a CMA, a lawyer or any other professional. The potential for incompetent or incapacitated HR professionals to do harm to employees, to employers, to clients and to society is at least as great as it is for accountants.

While regulating HR professionals is clearly in the interests of employees, Bill 138 has a lot to offer Ontario business, too. As business practices, economic conditions, workforce demographics and employee expectations all become more complex, HR professionals are at the centre of this rapid change. HRP and its members make significant contributions to the productivity and success of the business community and organizations of all types. HRP members possess a high level of professionalism and provide human capital management know-how that creates huge value for organizations that employ them.

There's a reason why I have been making comparisons with Ontario's three main accounting bodies. The proposed Registered Human Resources Professionals Act shares some similarities with the Certified Management Accountants Act. The idea is not that HR professionals are just like accountants, but that they are like accountants in terms of the kind of regulatory legislation that would best fit the profession. Like accountants, human resources professionals practise in a world of business.

They include a mix of practitioners that work as employees and as independent consultants. They perform roles that are mission-critical for organizations. They perform a role that requires high personal integrity. It's for these reasons that the act is very similar to the accountancy act, and it makes sense.

Let me speak briefly, outlining how the legislation works. First of all, Bill 138 does not introduce regulation to the HR profession in Ontario. This was, in fact, accomplished 20 years ago by the human resources professionals act, 1990. Most of the powers included in Bill 138 already exist in the current legislation. Since receiving the 1990 act, HRP has regulated the HR profession by setting standards of practice to protect the public interest. In sum, its regulatory framework seeks to ensure that HR professionals are competent in their work and behave in an ethical manner.

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HRP determines the right to set standards on who may enter the profession, the right to set standards of practice for those working in the profession, the right to create rules for when and how members may be removed from the profession, the power to regulate the practice of members, the power to establish professional liability insurance requirements, the power to establish requirements for membership and certification, and the power to discipline members.

Bill 138 would provide more regulatory tools for HRP to better protect the public. This is acknowledged when the public becomes aware of the fact that there are trained professionals in the field who follow appropriate standards. The continuing professional development of its members provides reassurance that the public and people are treated fairly and legally by practitioners. The public will feel confident that its interests are being protected.

There are also other checks and balances for the public and the members of HRP. Conduct proceedings would need to be up to the standards of the Statutory Powers Procedure Act. HRP would be required to abide by the fair registration practices code. The application of powers is subject to the bylaws, which must be ratified by the general membership of the association.

Another distinction would be that as a tier 1 profession, the board would include three individuals who are not members of the profession or a self-regulating human resources body and who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. These board members would, in effect, represent the public interest and would, along with the board's elected members, be charged with implementing the regulatory regime.

To conclude, let me say a couple of words about the support the bill has garnered. HRP sought an independent expert opinion on the bill from a distinguished lawyer. His name is Mr. Steineke. He believes that if Bill 138 is passed, it will create a modern professional regulation statute that addresses many of the gaps found in current private statutes. Overall provisions are similar to those found in other statutes regulating professions. If anything, the provisions provide greater safeguards.

Bill 138 has numerous advantages for the public and its members. Bill 138 has received strong support from the business community and allied professional groups, including the Retail Council of Canada, the Canadian employee regulation council, the Certified General Accountants and many other organizations that feel strongly about the bill. CGA Ontario president Doug Brooks wrote the Premier last summer in support of the bill.

Ultimately, protection of the public is what this bill is all about. That's why I brought this bill forward. That's why I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to join the debate today. What we're doing here, of course, is looking at Bill 138, the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, which was introduced on November 23, 2010. If this legislation were to be passed, it would replace the existing Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, 1990.

We're talking about an association that I believe currently has about 20,000 members and became a self-regulating professional association under statutory authority granted by the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, 1990, and since then has developed in scope, sophistication and responsibility to match the remarkable development and influence of the human resources profession.

I'm going to be making some remarks on behalf of my colleague the member for Whitby—Oshawa, who wanted to speak today but wasn't able to be here. Before I commence with her remarks, I want to just put on the record that, personally, I have received emails both in support of and in opposition to Bill 138. I would say to you that the numbers are probably about equal.

It's important to know that obviously, as a member of the opposition, it's my obligation to make sure that all of the points of view regarding legislation are placed on the table. Here's an example of one letter I received, an email: "I urge you to vote against this proposed bill when it comes up for second reading." The person goes on to state, as many of them did, that they have two primary concerns: Number one is the content of the bill and number two is the process that has been undertaken in communicating this bill to the membership and the lack of consultation. It's important that those concerns, which have been shared, I know, with other members of this Legislature, be put on the public record.

I will go now to deal with the comments that were given to me by my colleague the member for Whitby—Oshawa. She states the following:

She is pleased to support Bill 138. She feels it has much to offer Ontario business. She goes on to say, "Quite simply, Bill 138 is good for employers in the province of Ontario."

"Ontario businesses are in the midst of great change as business practices, economic conditions and workforce demographics and labour law all become more complex

and interrelated. And HR professionals are at the centre of this rapid change.

"HRPA members make huge contributions to the success and productivity of the business community and organizations of all types. And, as regulated professionals, HRPA members specifically possess a high level of professionalism and human capital management knowledge that creates enormous value for the organizations that employ them."

She continues by saying, "HR professionals provide value by:

"(1) identifying workforce trends and forecast changes before they happen;

"(2) discovering potential problems before they materialize and adversely impact the organization;

"(3) identifying key talent for retention and leadership development; and

"(4) forecasting changes in human capital resources—within the organization and in the changing economic environment.

"To sum up their key role in Ontario organizations, HR professionals 'put the right people in the right place at the right time.'"

She then goes on to say: "A regulated HR profession has big upsides for Ontario business. Regulated HR professionals commit to career-long learning that keeps them at the leading edge of human capital management—and human resources, or people, as any business person knows, is an organization's greatest competitive advantage.

"They also commit to an HR-specific code of professional conduct. These rules provide assurance to both employers and employees that there are clear guidelines defining the professional conduct of all HRPA members. The rules cover areas including:

"—competence;

"—legal requirements;

"—dignity in the workplace;

"—balancing interests;

"—confidentiality;

"—conflict of interest; and

"—professional growth and support of other professionals.

"Bill 138 will prevent the occasions where employers and clients of a practitioner try to pressure the practitioner to cut corners or do something that is unethical. It makes an enormous difference when a statutory regulatory body is able to provide information to the practitioner (or even, in some cases, the employer or the client directly) that such conduct is not permitted.

"Preventing that conduct will save employers money and resources in the long run.

"Some have argued that Bill 138 will be a cost burden to employers." My colleague goes on to say, "This is false.

"In regard to cost burden to members and their employers, the thing to keep in mind is that the membership in HRPA is voluntary and the CHRP designation is voluntary. Nothing forces HR professionals to be mem-

bers of the association and nothing forces HR professionals to obtain the CHRP designation. It is a fact that, on the whole, designated accountants command better remuneration than bookkeepers. Is that because employers and clients are forced to employ designated accountants? No, it is because the marketplace puts more value on designated accountants than bookkeepers.

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"In the 20 years it has been in existence, the CHRP has been very successful in demonstrating its value. If anything, Bill 138 will increase the value of the CHRP designation.

"Regulated HR professionals ensure employees are full partners in this process by acting as advocate and change mentors. With their knowledge about and advocacy of people, a regulated HR professional provides expertise in creating work environments in which people are motivated and fully contributing members.

"HR professionals are now often seen as 'champions of change' as organizations continually assess and seek to increase their professional effectiveness. They know how to link this change to the strategic needs of the organization while getting employees onside."

She wanted to make some specific comments at this point in time about human resource professionals being change agents with respect to the employment of people with disabilities. She says: "There are many people in Ontario who are able to work but are unable to find work because of attitudes about their disability.

"This issue was recently dealt with by the all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. Recommendation number 15 called upon a new agency, Mental Health and Addictions Ontario, to work with employers and community-based service providers on strategies to increase employment opportunities and supports for people with mental illnesses and addictions. The report noted that mental health and addictions issues in the workplace are a tremendous direct and indirect cost to the Canadian economy, but stated that: 'Employers with an understanding of mental health and addictions can provide an environment within which employees dealing with those issues are more likely to succeed and thrive. That understanding includes knowing how to hire prospective employees, how to accommodate the needs of both new and existing workers, and how to promote a healthy workplace. There could be an untapped supply of skilled workers waiting for the opportunity to enter or re-enter the job market with the appropriate supports.

"Training and employment supports (e.g., resumé writing, job interview techniques and job placements) ease reintegration into society and help in finding and retaining meaningful work. A job can do much to improve a person's financial situation, lessen their dependence on social assistance and, most importantly, bolster self-esteem at a critical point on the road to recovery.'

"So," she says, "It's clear that human resource professionals are critical for the success of this important transformation in both the workplace and in our society."

I would conclude by quoting again from the comments she has left with me: "A regulated HR professional with the strength of the profession as a backdrop can assume the role of objective investigator in instances of management-employee discord or appealing management decisions or disciplining inappropriate employee behaviour.

"Between HRPAs' commitment to professional excellence, their unique role as a bridge between employees and employers, and their key business role in getting the right people in the right place at the right time, I think," says the member for Whitby-Oshawa, "Bill 138 is a win-win for everyone—government, workers and Ontario's employers."

Those are the comments that I was asked to put on the record by the member for Whitby-Oshawa. I would conclude simply by referring to the point I made when I began. That was that I had received, and I know other people had received, emails expressing strong support for the bill. But of course, we also did receive emails that had grave reservations about the bill moving forward at the pace that it was without adequate consultation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's always a privilege to rise in this House to represent my constituents and to represent constituents in this particular industry. I have to say that, along with the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, I've received the same responses from my constituents and constituents in the industry, both for and against this bill. At first blush, this seems like a no-brainer. It looks like the bill that we just passed for the engineering association, somewhat along the same lines: a private bill that is now going to be made public and pass publicly.

What I'd like to do is I'm going to go over the arguments for, and I'm going to go over some of the argument against, which I don't think we've heard yet in this debate. Suffice to say, it's a private members' bill, which is to say that, unless it comes back as a government bill—touch wood—it doesn't have a lot of chance of passing in this session. What we're suggesting as New Democrats is that this bill be heard, that you have hearings, that you have deputations, because clearly there are voices who would like to speak to this bill that are far more informed about the field of HR than we are in this House.

Let's start with the arguments for, most of which you've already heard, so I'm going to be brief on those—not because they may not have merit but because we've already heard them.

This bill, as I said, makes a private act into a public act. It addresses some of the gaps that exist in the current act and brings the regulatory context up to date. It allows HR professionals to be on the same tier as other professions, notably accountants. It increases, perhaps, the value and career opportunities for those in the profession. It gives added weight to the CHRP designation. The regulatory powers extend only to the members; as has been pointed out, nothing in Bill 138 forces somebody into these regulatory acts unless they choose to do so.

Also, it gives some protection. Professional regulation protects the public. When professionals in independent practice go bankrupt, they can leave clients high and dry, hence the necessity for not only the designations and organization in this field but in all fields. You've heard those expanded upon.

Now I want to take a little bit of the House's time to go over the arguments that I've heard, also from constituents who are HR professionals who are concerned, about what some of the problems are. Certainly, many of them came to me and spoke about how this bill might be detrimental to their profession and to the companies and organizations they represent.

Their concerns circulate, mainly and mostly, around one key issue, and that is the lack of transparency and consultation. My goodness, if there's one thing we've all learned in this House with our own constituents, in our own parties and in our own lives, it's that when you want to make changes, you want to get many stakeholders together, have informed discussion, be transparent, give everybody a chance to speak, and then you move—not before. Clearly, it seems to me, from what I have received from constituents, that that hasn't happened here, hence another reason why we need these hearings and deputations.

Again, what I've heard from them is this: There's been inadequate debate among their members. They believe that the HRPPO has failed to engage, consult and listen to its members. Of the 29 chapter presidents and the board of directors who represent the 18,000-plus members, they say that the 29 chapter presidents and the board of directors were never consulted on the specifics of this bill at any time and were never asked for their input. That's a problem.

It's also a problem—and this was brought to our attention—that 1,000 members have petitioned against the bill. When you have 18,000 members and one in 18 petitions against the bill, I think we need to listen to that voice. I think we need to have that voice at the table in discussions, pure and simple.

Notably, the membership is asking that the bill not be rushed. Even those dissenting, I have to say, are not asking that this bill not pass in one day, but they are saying, "Let's have transparency and discussion."

The bill allows membership to be regulated. Almost 20% of the membership is made up of students. This is one concern raised by constituents: Do students really need to be regulated?

It's argued by the HRPPO that professional regulation protects the public; for example, in bankruptcy cases. But again, there has been no data brought forward that has shown that it could be harmed or not harmed. Again, further consultation is needed.

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Also—and this is something that really sticks in my mind; this raises a red flag to me. The Society for Human Resource Management currently has a legal dispute with HRPPO over the use of one of the designations: "senior human resources professional." So there's another body

out there that has problems with some of the designations and what constitutes a designation. Again, this is far from being like the bill we just passed so handily for the engineers, where there seemed to be real accord on what was necessary. Clearly, there's not real accord.

To make matters more complicated, listen to this—and those who are listening at home, many, many more than are in this place today, will ring with this, I'm sure, even if they know nothing about the human resources profession. On November 29, the HRPPO board of directors held a meeting, and the Toronto board agreed to fully comply with the new chapter bylaws proposed by HRPPO. Subsequent to this agreement, the HRPPO board of directors and CEO demanded that they sign a document that would take away their citizens' rights to express their concerns about this bill to any government official or to their members.

Now, I'm not a lawyer, but it sounds illegal to me. It certainly sounds coercive to me and it certainly sounds like a cause of concern within the context of this organization.

This is a problem. Any member who refused to sign would be removed from their position immediately. Carmine Domanico, one of the directors, refused to sign and was subsequently removed from his position. The other 11 board members refused to sign and were removed from their positions. The charges have yet to be proved.

Friends, colleagues, we've got some problems here. Before we weigh in as a legislative body, saying that we want to give even an imprimatur to the existing powers, or in a public way—remember, we're doing this in a public way—to really weigh in and give them potentially more power than they already have, I suspect that we need to hear from some of those concerned in at least that case, give them their day in court and their day before us to hear from them. It makes me and it makes us, in the New Democratic Party, a little loath to jump in and say, "Oh, this is a wonderful thing," if all of these problems are out there. Luckily the legislative process allows for this and, luckily, because it is a private member's bill and not a government bill, it allows for this.

I wanted to take the few remaining moments I have and explain to the public, for whom this place is often full of arcane rules and regulations that don't make a lot of sense, exactly what will happen from here, one thinks. As a private member's bill, it may or may not get committee time. As a private member's bill, it may or may not have hearings. As a private member's bill, its chances of actually being passed are pretty remote, even for a Liberal government backbencher.

For those who have concerns on either side, either they think that this should pass immediately, or those who have concerns about it on the other side and think it should never pass, you will have your day in court. You will have your day, I hope, to stand up and witness to your concerns before committee before this ever comes to fruition. I want to assure both sides about that and assure both sides that it probably won't happen this time around.

Even more to the point, you'll have a chance to voice your opinion to your candidates, if you are in the human resources field, leading up to the next election on October 6. I would suspect and suggest that if you are an HR professional and you feel strongly one way or the other about this bill, that's exactly what you should do: You should talk to your member of provincial Parliament or candidates who are running against them. Make your case heard. Be at all-candidates meetings; be very clear about what you think so that they have some basis upon which to judge and so that, dependent on who's in government and who's sitting over there after October 6—it may very well look very different—that case will then be brought forward, and certainly with more nuance than we're seeing this afternoon.

"No fear. It's not going to happen overnight" is basically what I'm saying—or maybe "Fears, it's not going to happen overnight," depending on what side you're on on this issue. Either way, I think it's a good thing, because from what we've heard in my office, we need further debate on this. From what I've heard in my office, we need to hear both sides on this and we need to at least allow those voices to be heard. Again, it's not our area of expertise. In a case like that, it's even more important to hear the experts from both sides weigh in.

So that's what we're going to do. We're going to kind of sit this one out as New Democrats. The government has power; I'm sure it will pass. But I just want to assure people that it doesn't mean much. If it passes in this House this afternoon, it doesn't mean much. What it does mean is that everyone out there who's opposed to this—and everyone who's in favour of it, for that matter—needs to let their voice be heard by their MPPs, needs to demand that it go no further and certainly that it not come back as a government bill, because then we're in real trouble if you're opposed to this bill. If it goes forward anywhere, it should go to committee and have deputations and hearings. That's what we're proposing. That's what we need.

That's what we have to say on this. It's good to hear all voices. I hope I've been able to do them some justice. As I say, we're sitting on our hands on this one, letting it go. Government is going to weigh in and make it pass.

I certainly suggest that if you have concerns about this bill, speak directly to the corner office. We know that nothing happens in this place without the say-so of Dalton McGuinty, the Premier. We all know that; we just don't say it too often. If you have real concerns about this, please send your emails to him, make your concerns heard and demand that either way—I think, to be fair to either side of this issue, we need committee hearings, and we need not to rush on implementing anything that is certainly seen as being this controversial in its own field. Good luck, everyone.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm pleased and honoured to enter the debate on Bill 138, the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2011.

I'm going to be different from the member opposite. I'm going to be more positive. I'm going to look at the glass as half full instead of half empty because—you know what?—in the end, it's a private member's bill. I want to commend the member from Willowdale for always bringing such important issues to the House to be debated. He knows, as a lawyer, that a lot of technical issues have to be fixed, have to be enhanced to support and serve the people of Ontario.

He's asking in this bill to replace the private act of 1990 with a public bill, Bill 138. Like the member opposite, I have received a lot of messages from many different constituents too—some with and some against.

As you know and the member knows very well, no bill goes right away and becomes a law. The bill has to be debated in this place, and then, if it passes second reading, it goes to the committee. When it goes to the committee, we're going to listen to a lot of stakeholders from across the province, a lot of interested people, a lot of people for and against who are going to voice their concern. We've got to listen to them in order to enhance the bill and make it applicable for all the people of Ontario.

But in the end, my colleague from Willowdale brought such an important issue, because the human resources professionals are more than 20,000 members across Ontario. They deal with at least two million employees across the province, almost 800,000 businesses, and they know exactly what's going on in those businesses. They know about the employers, they know about the employees, and they know all the secrets. They know about every detail. I think it's in our own interest as a government to protect the people of Ontario, to regulate this industry and to make professional organizations and also enhance the ability to protect the citizens of this province. That's what my colleague is trying to do: bring some kind of enhancement to an act passed almost 20 or 21 years ago. As you know, the technology is enhanced, life has changed, and many different professional systems came in our lives like computer systems, iPads, many different pieces of technology. So I think it's very important to enhance it and make it public instead of keeping it private, for the sake of the protection of the people of Ontario.

To the member opposite, I know that the people have a right to voice their concern, but to make it a political bill, to make it an election issue, as you mentioned, and the people, when you knock on the doors, you have to ask them if they support this or not support this—I think the people of Ontario are thinking about bigger things and important things. They're especially thinking about the economy, creating more jobs, green energy, if they have lights on or not, how they can cope with the future and find a job for the future generations, how we can enhance our education system and how we can keep our health care in the public domain and accessible for all.

**1550**

Also, this bill affects every profession: health care, education, companies, factories and many places that use

human resources. Those human resources department professionals determine what kind of jobs we can create. They oversee the number of jobs that we have and the quality of the jobs. They know details about all the employees, their qualifications, and their problems, if they have any. That's why they are most able to have access to private information about millions of people in Ontario.

I want to commend my colleague for bringing such an important issue to us to be debated in this place. I hope this bill passes and will go to committee and the committee, hopefully, will discuss this bill more and invite all stakeholders and people who have any concerns about this issue to come forward, voice their concerns, advise us on how to fix it and make it applicable and good for all people in Ontario.

I read this bill, and I think it's very technical. I received so many different emails. I was reading them a few minutes ago before I came to the House to see what I was going to say when I stood up in my place to speak about this bill.

I want to talk to all the people who sent me emails. I want to thank you very much for advising me and giving me your input and voicing your concern. When you voice your concern to me and educate me about your concerns, at least I know exactly what's going on outside this chamber. It will also give me the ability to use my judgment in order to support the people of Ontario.

I think it's important to bring such important things to the House to be debated and to listen to all the concerns from both sides of the House. In the end, I want to say that our aim and goal is to strengthen the ability of the people of Ontario, give them the power and comfort they need and create an environment to create more jobs and to maintain the jobs we have in the province. Human resource professionals play a pivotal role in creating and maintaining jobs and in choosing the best of the best of the people of Ontario to occupy those jobs.

Again, thank you very much for allowing me to speak. I want to congratulate my colleague for bringing such an important issue to us. I'm saying publicly that I'm going to support it to pass second reading. I'm also recommending that it go to committee to be debated more, to listen to many stakeholders to strengthen it and to give it a chance to pass as a law in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's a pleasure to rise to speak to this particular piece of legislation brought forth by a member, my colleague the member from Willowdale, who has a long and enviable tradition in this House of bringing forward well-thought-through, progressive, sensible proposed pieces of legislation. This is certainly one of them.

I think it's worth starting with a bit of a perspective. We're talking about a profession that, in its roots, evolved from basically the boss depending upon his or her personal intuition in hiring people to progressing through the function of what was called, as many of us

were growing up, personnel. The function evolved into a profession. It was a profession that had a set of core principles and that used a recognizable and, more importantly, teachable body of knowledge, that governed itself through recognized and uniform standards and that moved forward through the evolution and the leadership of its peers. That's where we are today.

The profession became such in the early 1990s. I believe it was 1990 that its first act was passed. In Ontario, it touched that plateau of maturity in being recognized as a profession that was called "human resources." Today in Ontario, some 20,000 people earn a living as human resources professionals.

Bill 138 builds on the success of the human resources profession. As their act in 1990 brought the personnel function into the 20th century as the human resources profession, so too Bill 138 brings the human resources profession into the 21st century through being able to enhance such things as the setting of standards; the enforcement of those standards; the service and certification of members—certainly you've heard of the CHRP designation; providing a means of redress for members, employees, employers and the general public; and giving the profession the tools and methods of such professionals as doctors, accountants, lawyers and so on.

So, I think, a few words here to say what it is that we're trying to do. This act applies to members of the Human Resources Professionals Association only, not those who wish to say that they're out there consulting in the practice of personnel, staffing or whatever. It will not affect the transferability of the CHRP designation for members of the HRP. It won't increase dues or costs. Most of what's in there, the act merely clarifies. These are functions that are largely done today.

This is a piece of legislation influenced by a great deal of homework and consultation. There were some 40-plus communications efforts—articles, newsletters, chapter visits and so on and so forth—over the past three years. The profession sought independent expert legal opinions and came to a conclusion that the proposals are, in fact, good for their members, good for their employers and good for the general public. This empowers the Human Resources Professionals Association to advance in scope, sophistication and responsibility and meet the organization-wide challenges of the 21st century, where human capital is more strategic, in many cases, than financial capital.

We need skilled HR professionals who work within a framework of rules and regulations that they don't get in their corporate environments. We need them to bring to the organization, its stakeholders and the people affected by what the organization does the full range of expertise that they acquire and use, in such areas as setting missions and goals, setting strategies, measuring organizational effectiveness, matching staffing needs to the available labour pool, sourcing strategic skills for the organization, retaining key employees, coming up with a fair framework of compensation and full and proper costing, both present and future. These are all things that HR people do.

Training and development, for example, in the IT sector: One assumes that it takes between 10 and 20 days a year just to stay even in your field. In most knowledge work today, that function of training, development and employee retention is key, because your primary assets are the people who walk out the door on Friday afternoon and go home for the weekend. You've got to have them managed, and managed well, and that's what the HRPA does. You can't waste people, time and money; you have to manage them, and that's what the HRPA does. Those are the tools and techniques that this act enables them to advance in sophistication and to enforce, to ensure that in the future, HR professionals are getting the best possible association they can get.

So, good for the Human Resources Professionals Association. They're providing for the profession such functions as networking, leadership and management development, the evolution of a common body of standards and management of that all-important CHRP designation. They're giving people a chance to discuss the ideas, to share some of their thoughts and, basically, as HR professionals, to play a role in advancing their profession, their company, their skills and the people whose careers they affect so deeply; managing them with the best possible tools and techniques and ensuring that, here in Ontario and here in Canada, our organizations manage human resources as effectively as we possibly can.

What we've done here is to empower the Human Resources Professionals Association with a world-class regulatory framework. Good for them. Go forward, HR people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The honourable member for Willowdale has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I just want to address this business of the petition in objection to it. The petition was signed by about 800 people. Of those 800 people, approximately only 420 signatories were members of HRPA. The total membership of HRPA is 20,000. I can tell you that there are 28 or 29 chapters of the association in Ontario, and 83% of those 28 or 29 chapters support this matter. That 83% represents almost 20,000 members.

With respect to the consultation, I have a list here of consultations going back, starting in February 2008 and going right up—the most recent was February 18, 2011, last week, in the Kingston, Quinte, Northumberland, Brockville and Peterborough chapters. The consultations include website consultations; two presentations at the AGM of the association, one in 2009 and one in 2010; various webinars; and other consultation vehicles. I have the titles of each of the consultation meetings.

1600

With respect, let me just put this in some context. If this bill is passed, it's going to create in Ontario one of the best employer-employee labour relations relationships in the world. That's good for Ontario, because that makes Ontario a good place for companies to set up shop and employ people. It will attract business. It will keep

business here in Ontario. This is good for the economy of Ontario. We want to have the best employer-employee relationship model in the world.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

## SMALL BUSINESS BILL OF RIGHTS, 2011

### CHARTRE DES DROITS DES PETITES ENTREPRISES DE 2011

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will first deal with ballot item number 64, standing in the name of Mrs. Munro. I'd ask members to take their seats.

Mrs. Munro has moved second reading of Bill 152, An Act to enact a Bill of Rights for small business.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mrs. Munro.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'd ask that this be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Agreed that the bill be referred to the finance committee? Agreed. So ordered.

## ONTARIO SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR L'ASSOCIATION DES INGÉNIEURS DE L'ONTARIO

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll now deal with ballot item number 65, standing in the name of Mr. Kwinter.

Mr. Kwinter has moved second reading of Bill 148, An Act respecting the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Kwinter.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I ask that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Agreed? So ordered.

## REGISTERED HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 SUR LES PROFESSIONNELS EN RESSOURCES HUMAINES INSCRITS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 66, standing in the name of Mr. Zimmer.

Mr. Zimmer has moved second reading of Bill 138, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Zimmer.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I would ask that this be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Referred to the general government committee? Agreed? So ordered.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOOD GOVERNMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA SAINTE GESTION PUBLIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 6, 2010, on the motion for third reading of Bill 110, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 110, Loi visant à promouvoir

une saine gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

Seeing none, on December 1, 2010, Mrs. Smith moved third reading of Bill 110, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some nos.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

I've been given a deferral slip. Pursuant to standing order 28(h), Mr. Leal has requested that the vote on third reading of Bill 110, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts, be deferred until deferred votes on Monday, March 7, 2011. So ordered.

*Third reading vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1605.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, P.C., Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craiton, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Gélinas, France (NDP) <b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) <b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud Trinity–Spadina Cambridge	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) <b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York-Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London-Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga-Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth-Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakubuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey  
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson  
Kim Craiton, Bob Delaney  
Garfield Dunlop, Peter Fonseca  
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese  
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett  
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Pat Hoy, Helena Jaczek  
Norm Miller, Leeanna Pendergast  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell  
Jim Brownell, Steve Clark  
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac  
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese  
Bill Mauro, David Orazietti  
Joyce Savoline  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown  
Donna H. Cansfield, Aileen Carroll, P.C.  
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman  
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast  
Jim Wilson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi  
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle  
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos  
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi  
Bas Balkissoon, Joe Dickson  
Sylvia Jones, Amrit Mangat  
Norm Miller, Yasir Naqvi  
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman  
Wayne Arthurs, Aileen Carroll, P.C.  
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette  
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals  
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
David Caplan, Kim Craiton  
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on the proposed transaction of the TMX  
Group and the London Stock Exchange Group / Comité  
spécial sur la transaction proposée entre le Groupe TMX et le  
London Stock Exchange Group**

Chair / Président: Gerry Phillips  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Frank Klees  
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs  
Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown  
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips  
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day





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No. 90

N° 90

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)****Monday 7 March 2011****Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)****Lundi 7 mars 2011**Speaker  
Honourable Steve PetersPrésident  
L'honorable Steve PetersClerk  
Deborah DellerGreffière  
Deborah Deller

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111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 March 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 mars 2011

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence, inner thought and personal reflection.

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My page Tyler Millson is the page captain today. I'm very pleased to introduce his mom and dad, Bart and Maureen Millson, and as well, two of his brothers: Quinn and seven-month-old Kane Millson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'm very pleased to introduce two Kingstonians here today. One is Bill Dobson, who's the board president of a local, non-profit, Kingston-based housing organization. He's here with his wife, Nancy Churchman. Please give them a good welcome here at Queen's Park.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'd like to introduce Lucas Maciesza and his father, Rick Maciesza, who are here at Queen's Park today for the PNH press conference. Welcome.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'd like to introduce Mr. Barry Katsof and Hilary Handley, who are also here for the PNH press conference. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like all members to join me in welcoming my brother Joe Peters to the Legislature today. Welcome. I think maybe you just need to grow a goatee and we can switch jobs for a day.

### DECORUM IN CHAMBER

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Just before we begin question period today, I'd like to take a few minutes to talk once again about the imprint we make on this institution in the way we behave.

I certainly appreciate that we are only months away from an election in this province, but the fact is, the writ has yet to be dropped and when it is, the pursuit will occur where it should: in the communities and the constituencies that we serve. Bringing the seamier elements of an election campaign into this chamber badly erodes its dignity, and I am at a loss to understand what purpose the members think it serves when they engage in personal and often spiteful attacks on one another across the floor.

Recent question periods have been overshadowed by insulting, provocative and bullying language that has

reached vitriolic at times; that is, when members can be heard over the cacophony of heckles.

Let me suggest that members consider certain principles as we go forward:

Time is scarce; use it intelligently. As your Speaker, I do not like having to interrupt the flow of question period as often as I've been doing. The time wasted when I have to do that could allow for more questions to be asked and answered.

Secondly, the public are watching, in some significant numbers—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members should be listening. While question period is not ever going to be a wholly tranquil affair, it nevertheless behooves us to remember that our constituents do see us, and to behave in a manner that respects them.

Thirdly: Finally, while I have tried to allow the greatest freedom possible in asking questions, it would be helpful if members could remember that the purpose of question period is to hold the government to account for its policies. This is done by asking questions and seeking information about those government policies. That purpose is not well served when question period becomes simply a forum for thinly veiled personal or partisan attacks. This last point, in particular, needs to be understood by both sides of the House.

Question period is, and will continue to be, a rather spontaneous and very animated proceeding, and I am the first to admit to enjoying its cut and thrust. But I do believe that it is possible to maintain an acceptable level of civil discourse and that doing so need not impede any ability to aggressively press for information or ardently defend policies. Surely we can maintain a level of respect for one another and for this extraordinary institution without resorting to the kind of behaviour that we have witnessed of late.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: On February 22, the Ontario Energy Board ruled that hydro utilities could pass on \$18 million in legal costs to Ontario families. Premier, these are legal costs to the hydro utilities who were caught charging criminal rates of interest to people who had not paid their bills.

The next day we asked Minister Duguid what he was going to do to oppose this and save Ontario families from being hit with this bill, particularly families who actually paid their bills on time. The minister stood in the House and said that he directed Hydro One to not pass on these costs to ratepayers.

Premier, could you inform the House how much of the \$18 million will be saved from going on the backs of hard-pressed ratepayers?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm pleased to revisit this issue again a couple of weeks later. Nothing has really changed other than the fact that I've written a letter to all local distribution companies letting them know that we're of the view that they should follow our lead with Hydro One. Hydro One will not be passing on these costs to their energy consumers. We recommend to local distribution companies that they take a look at the leadership we're showing on this and do the best they can to emulate the approach that we're taking.

But I think it's important for everybody listening to the debate today to know that these practices really began under the Davis government. They were done long before we took office, and we are, I think, dealing with this in a very responsible and reasonable way with regard to Hydro One.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, with all due respect, something important has changed. Today, the Ontario PC caucus has released a letter from the Electricity Distributors Association, the EDA. The letter says the following: "Contrary to what is suggested in the minister's letter ... the reason that Hydro One is not collecting these amounts is not because of the minister's intervention, but because it was not a defendant in the lawsuit and was therefore not part of the settlement."

Minister, again today you've made a big show, saying that you've told Hydro One not to pass on this fee to the ratepayers, but the Electricity Distributors Association says that that's not in keeping with the facts. In fact Hydro One was not a defendant, and in short, Minister, families are still stuck with the full \$18-million bill.

Minister, why did you just tell the House that you gave people some relief when in reality you did no such thing?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** As I said, this is a lawsuit that started in 1998 in the Ontario courts. It's applying to a practice that began in 1981 under the Davis government. Indeed, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice made a ruling that local distribution companies should go to the Ontario Energy Board, an independent regulator, for direction on the recovery of these settlement costs. I've given direction to Hydro One. We've had discussions. It wasn't an official direction; it was a discussion with Hydro One that, as they're to implement this, they're to consider the implication of this on their consumers, and they are. Their response back to me is, indeed, that they will not be passing on any such costs to their consumers.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, here is the problem, and I mean it with all due respect: It increasingly looks like you're in over your head. This is a very serious matter. This is not the first consequential mistake that you've made, and it means, at the end of the day, that Ontario families are getting stuck with the bill for your incompetence.

Your statements are very clear. In fact, in your letter to the hydro utilities, you said, "I would strongly urge you to make the same good faith gesture to your customers"—referring to your bravado, that you ordered Hydro One not to pass these costs along. But, Minister, you've been caught out. Hydro One was not part of the lawsuit; therefore, there are no costs assigned to Hydro One.

You said something that was not in keeping with the facts to this Legislature. You said something that was not in keeping with the facts to the people of Ontario. Minister, is this sheer incompetence, or did you deliberately tell them something that was not in keeping with the facts?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Once again, I repeat: In my discussions with Hydro One, I advised them not to pass on these costs to their consumers. They've agreed not to pass on these costs to their consumers. Indeed, I've written to local distribution companies across this province, suggesting that they follow that lead and not pass on these costs to consumers.

I guess my question to the Leader of the Opposition is, have you contacted local distribution companies in your area to suggest that they follow our lead on this? What is your position? Should local distribution companies pass these costs—costs incurred under your previous government—on to consumers or should they not?

We've made it clear where we stand. We've suggested to those local distribution companies that they should not pass those costs on. Where do you stand?

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I think, under the circumstances, a question back to the Premier of the province: Premier, your Minister of Energy has been caught out in saying a number of things that were not in keeping with the facts. The minister stated in the House last week on this issue, "I stated very unequivocally that we've given Hydro One direction not to pass on these increases to their consumers." Today, he says it wasn't direction; it was a conversation. We've heard from the Electricity Distributors Association that Hydro One was not part of the suit. This is false bravado from the minister, Mr. Premier, and something not in keeping with the facts.

This is not the first time that your minister has made a significant error in the facts. This is an important portfolio, and bills are going through the roof.

Premier, do you still have faith in your Minister of Energy, given this latest screw-up?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I have tremendous faith in my Minister of Energy, I have tremendous confidence in the work that he is doing and I'm proud of the results that he is achieving for the people of Ontario.

On this particular matter, the Minister of Energy is driving hard in a positive, forward direction. We are building more generation than ever before. We are shutting down our coal-fired plants. We are creating thousands of new jobs, which are desperately needed by Ontario families. We are going to secure our supply of electricity for the next 20, 40 and 60 years. This is hard work. He's doing it very well.

I again put to my honourable colleague opposite that he has no plan for electricity. He says that if he were to do all this work, it would not raise our bills a single penny. I don't think anybody believes that.

We're doing the hard work. We're getting it done. We're cleaning up our air. We're creating new jobs. We're ensuring we have a reliable supply of electricity.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, I've expressed my concern that you have fallen increasingly out of touch with what's happening in Ontario homes today. I'll remind you that hydro bills for average families and seniors are going through the roof. I have seniors coming up to me with their hydro bill with their hand shaking, saying, "I can't pay this."

People who have paid their bills their entire life and played by the rules are in jeopardy of not making their hydro bills because of your expensive policies. They would expect, at the very least, that the Minister of Energy would be on top of his file and that, when he makes public statements, they would be in keeping with the facts.

The minister made a big show saying that he had ordered Hydro One not to pass on these costs. We find out today that that is a false promise and false bravado, because it's not in keeping with the facts.

Premier, why are Ontario families stuck with the bills of your minister's obvious incompetence?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague says he's championing the interests of seniors, so why wouldn't he support our clean energy benefit, which is reducing their bills by 10%? Why did he stand opposed to our efforts to reduce the cost of generic drugs by 50%, which would benefit seniors? Why does he oppose our Ontario energy and property tax credit of \$1,025 for seniors? Why does he oppose our Ontario property tax credit of \$625 for seniors? Why does he stand against our aging at home strategy, a \$1-billion investment to ensure seniors get more care at home where they live? In each and every instance where we've put forward specific initiatives and benefits for seniors, why has he stood in the way of those?

I'll tell you why: because he doesn't support more investment in health care, education or supporting seniors. Ultimately, he's going to put forward reckless tax cuts, and what will flow from that, as surely as night follows day, will be dramatic cuts to public services, including those that benefit Ontario seniors.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It's no surprise that the Premier talks about everything except what I asked him here today.

Premier, you know that this is very basic. Your Minister of Energy doesn't know what he's doing, and Ontario families are being stuck with the bill. Last week, we had the embarrassing scenario where he said one thing about the hydro wires going through Caledonia—that they weren't needed, when his own ministry's website said that in fact they were needed—and now a very serious error in judgment, Premier, or else an attempt not to get all the facts out on the story.

The Electricity Distributors Association takes issue. They say the reason that Hydro One is not collecting these amounts is not because of the minister's intervention, but because it was not a defendant in the lawsuit and was, therefore, not part of the settlement.

Premier, isn't your minister in over his head?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague raised the issue of seniors, so I'm going to stick with the issue of seniors for a moment.

One of the things I've learned from talking to seniors, many of whom are grandparents, is that if you ask them what is most important to them, they'll say it's the equality of opportunities made available to their grandchildren. One of the things they're concerned about is that my honourable colleague and his party plan to shut down full-day kindergarten in the province of Ontario. We plan to implement that fully by 2014. It's going to benefit 247,000 four- and five-year-olds. It's going to secure a bright future for them and for our economy.

My honourable colleague needs to know: When he's out there talking to seniors, he might want to remind them that he is not prepared to stand up for their grandchildren by standing up for full-day kindergarten in Ontario.

## SMART METERS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Does the Minister of Energy have any studies on the impact the government's so-called smart meters are having on consumers?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Smart meters have just been installed in most households across the province—about 4.5 million smart meters installed on budget and on time, which was confirmed last week; something we're very pleased with.

Yes, as the implementation of time-of-use is coming into place, local distribution companies are monitoring how that's going. In fact, we're working very closely with local distribution companies like Toronto Hydro, who were pretty much first out of the gate, and they are doing studies as we go. We don't have a full year of experience yet, but we have some preliminary data that Hydro One has shared with us that does show, indeed, on average there's a modest savings to consumers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, I don't know what study this minister's talking about. On Friday he was quoted saying that families, on average, are saving, but the Toronto Hydro data that he cites shows, in fact, that 80% of families are actually paying more. So I'd like to see the numbers he's talking about.

Would he be surprised to learn, actually, that other utilities are reporting similar kinds of results?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think it's time for the NDP to catch up with the rest of the modernized world when it comes to electricity. President Obama said this about smart meters: "It's a debate between looking backward and looking forward, between those who are ready to seize the future and those who are afraid of the future."

1050

I can tell you: We're not afraid of the future; we welcome the future. We are making the investments needed in our electricity system to ensure that future generations have an energy system that is modern, that is up to date, that is reliable and that is clean. I can't understand why the NDP would be so against that. There was a time when they used to support those initiatives. Those times must be gone. We need to modernize our energy system with or without the support of the NDP. We need to move forward, not backwards.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I can't understand why this minister claims that on average people are saving with smart meters when studies say the exact opposite. Hydro One conducted a study of 3,100 customers last year. Over a six-month period they found that 57% of their customers were paying more with smart meters than they would have before. Why wasn't the minister aware of this study? If he was, why isn't he telling anybody about it?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Actually, I'm fully aware of that study; indeed, that's the study I was using that indicates that, on average, energy consumers are saving. Now, the saving is modest, to be sure—the NDP have trouble adding; we know that—but we're determined to modernize our energy system. I guess the NDP would have had us replace those outdated old meters with outdated old meters.

No, we're modernizing our energy system. We're replacing the old meters with modern smart meters. We're moving toward time-of-use so that we can help Ontario consumers manage their energy costs and understand that there are different costs to energy—to the system—depending on when you use energy. It's very important, as we move forward to a modern society and a modern energy system, that consumers are fully aware of the costs of energy, on-peak and off-peak.

#### SMART METERS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Minister of Energy. By now, the government has spent

over a billion dollars on the so-called smart meters. Households will be paying that debt for decades to come. When we take into account the cost, 76% of households in the study indicate that they're paying more. The government says smart meters were going to actually save families some money. What happened?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I certainly responded to that question in the beginning. Indeed, overall, on average, consumers are saving. The program is new. We're watching it very, very carefully as it's being implemented. We want to make sure that it works for all different sectors of consumers as best as possible. But we're determined to modernize our energy system. We're not going to go backward to the old system. We're not going to go backward to the old meters. We need to move forward. We need to modernize our energy system.

We need smart meters, indeed, to build a smart grid. You would think the leader of the opposition would know how important smart meters are as the first step toward building that smart grid, modernizing our energy system. If we're ever going to bring electric cars into this province—and most would say they're going to start coming online over the next 10 or 20 years—Ontario has to be ready. Our energy system has to be ready, and the leader should know that smart meters are an important part of modernizing our system, so we have—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Families are struggling every day to deal with bills that just keep climbing higher and higher. They want a government to make their lives more affordable. Study after study shows very clearly that the \$1 billion spent on smart meters is driving bills up. Can the minister produce any evidence—any clear evidence—before us in this House that this is not the case?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** When we initially set out with this program, an analysis was done. What the analysis showed is that there is indeed a \$1-billion investment. Over 15 years, that \$1 billion will accrue \$1.6 billion in savings. You have to invest in modernizing our energy system if you're going to get access to those savings. There was a time when the NDP used to believe in conservation. There was a time when the NDP used to understand the need to help people shift from peak use to non-peak use. Smart meters are an important part of that.

One thing I would do is thank the leader of the opposition, because she was quoting a report that came out last week that indicated that the implementation of smart meters has indeed come on in this province on time and on budget. We're on track to save \$1.6 billion over the next 15 years. It's not always easy like the NDP makes it out to be, but—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** For families getting hit with higher costs every time they drive their car, buy their groceries or heat their homes, spending \$1 billion on a scheme to make life even more expensive is cruel and unusual punishment. It's not saving energy; it's not

saving money. The government can try to obfuscate these facts, but the people know what they see on their bills every single month.

Why can't this minister produce any evidence whatsoever to back his claim that people are saving money?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The leader of the third party wants to make Ontarians believe that somehow or another we can clean up our energy system, we can build the power supply that we need to provide a reliable source of energy for families and businesses across this province, we can have an efficient system across Ontario, and we can do it for free. I think Ontario families are going to see right through that leader. They're going to recognize that you can't build a clean, modern, reliable energy system without making investments. You can't do it for free.

We're making the investments that we need to make to build a clean, reliable, modern energy system to get us out of coal, to build a cleaner environment, to build a healthier future for our kids and grandkids. There was a time the NDP used to believe in that. They don't any longer.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. Today the Toronto Sun revealed your "dirty ways." Over a three-year period you rang up big bills and an even bigger carbon footprint as an "environmental pooh-bah."

So I ask you, as Minister of Research and Innovation, are you researching and advising the Premier at the cabinet table on ways to stick Ontario families with a carbon tax and the bill for you—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just ask the honourable member to tie his question into the minister's portfolio, please.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** It's research and innovation and it's the minister's behaviour—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I believe that the Minister of the Environment can answer this question because both of us have the same position on this.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I can tell the House that it is very important for all of us to recognize that we keep on loading our atmosphere with all of this carbon dioxide and the planet now has a fever and we have to do something about it. On this side of the House, we are convinced that we can use cap and trade as a mechanism to get down carbon dioxide emissions. We say no to a carbon tax and we've been very clear about that.

Just like the former Progressive Conservative government under Brian Mulroney used cap and trade to get sulphur dioxide emissions down to protect our lakes and to get rid of acid rain, we believe that is the methodology that we can use and other progressive governments around the world can use to get carbon dioxide capped and lowered. We need to do that for our children. The planet has a fever and we need to do something about it.

Though there may be others who disagree with us, we believe that the marketplace using cap and trade is the right way to get that down. We say no to a carbon tax and we say no to a methodology that was used to successfully protect—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Back to the Minister of Research and Innovation, who spends a great deal of time talking about a carbon tax. It's interesting that the government didn't talk about the HST but we got that tax. They didn't talk about the health tax; we got that tax. They're spending a great deal of time talking about a carbon tax and Ontario families simply can't trust that after the next election you won't bring in a carbon tax as your next favourite tax.

Minister, over three years you spent \$110,000 jetting around the globe. You stayed at swanky hotels like the St. Paul luxury hotel in Montreal and the Château Frontenac in Quebec City. Your 126 flights—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Your question was about the carbon tax. You are not dealing with the carbon tax. I'd ask you to get to your point, please.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, he's spewing carbon at 36,000 kilograms over a three-year period, which is an awful lot of carbon to clean up with a carbon tax, so I ask the minister—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Next question, the leader of the third party.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Families in northern Ontario were expecting that after four years the McGuinty Liberals' growth plan would take action on the real challenges facing northerners, like the loss of value-added jobs, the soaring cost of electricity rates and the higher cost of living. But instead of action, northern Ontario gets yet another promise of even more discussion. Why did the McGuinty Liberals let the north down yet again?

1100

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** It's very unfortunate that the leader of the third party is not supporting northern Ontario's own vision for growth and the future of the next 25 years. The fact is that northerners are extraordinarily enthusiastic about this plan. It exhibited—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I can give you some quotes that will impress you.

"The growth plan for northern Ontario is a major step forward for this region and for the province as a whole. It recognizes the north's many unique qualities and lays out a long-term road map for success on a global scale," said Keith Hobbs, the mayor of the city of Thunder Bay.

I can read you more quotes, and maybe I will in the second part of this.

But what's disappointing—northerners themselves have put together a plan over a three-year period in which we had a remarkable and unprecedented consultation period. They've laid out a vision for the future, a vision that, indeed, we look forward to implementing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's unprecedented in its length and remarkable in its lack of any action. Not only has this government stood on the sidelines while families in northern Ontario lost good jobs; they've made things worse by driving up the cost of living and letting electricity prices soar.

Instead of confronting those challenges, we get a government talking about more talk. As one northern newspaper put it, it's "a plan to create a plan." After eight long years, is this the best the Premier can come up with?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** This is a vision that was developed by northerners for northerners. They are very keen to move forward on this. Quite frankly, I'm not going to let the cynicism and the lack of support from the third party stop us from moving forward on implementing this plan.

We have a number of marquee initiatives in place. We're looking at putting together a northern policy institute and a multi-modal transportation strategy.

The important thing here is that northerners do indeed support this. If I have more time for some quotes, let me give some here.

"The Métis Nation of Ontario is encouraged to see that the growth plan ... clearly recognizes that Métis communities need to be key partners in implementation. We look forward to working together in order to build a strong, vibrant and prosperous future for the Métis Nation...."

We have a positive quote here from Tom Laughren, the mayor of the city of Timmins. "This plan marks a major step forward for northern Ontario to take its place in the global economy."

The fact is, this plan speaks to northerners' aspirations. It speaks to our plan to develop a vision over the short term, over the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. I'm concerned about intervenor services funding for those who are either deaf, deafened, hard-of-hearing or deaf-blind.

As you know, intervenor funding to community-based agencies is used to enhance communication between individuals who are deaf-blind and their community. For many, it is the only way they can communicate. Some have said that funding for intervenor services will be cut by 45%. To the minister, is this true?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I want to thank the MPP for Ottawa Centre for his great advocacy on this matter.

I want to be clear: We are not cutting funding to deaf-blind services. In fact, since we came to office, funding

for deaf-blind services has more than doubled. We are investing more than \$20 million this year.

I rejected—I repeat, I rejected—the proposed funding model for intervenor services in the fall of 2010. This decision was also communicated last fall to the stakeholders.

While this proposed funding model will not be implemented, we do need some type of funding model in order to allocate resources in a fair, transparent and sustainable manner. The system that our government has inherited was unfair: Funding was allocated by chance rather than by need.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I know that people who receive these services will be relieved to hear that no cuts are being made and that, in fact, the funding has increased.

Quite frankly, those who are intentionally misleading people into thinking that there are cuts must stop. When someone's ability to communicate is dependent on these services, the last thing they should be is fearful of losing that service for someone else's political gain.

Moving forward, it is important that our government work with the deaf-blind community for any future consultations. To the minister: How are you working with people who are deaf-blind and the organizations that provide these valuable services?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Several years ago, my ministry established the intervenor stakeholder advisory group. Some of these organizations include DeafBlind Ontario Services, the CNIB, the Canadian Hearing Society and the Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind.

This advisory group has contributed to the development of our developmental services transformation plans, the assessment tool and, of course, the funding model. I have regular meetings with these agencies, individuals and families in the deaf-blind community. In fact, I will be visiting one of these agencies later this week.

As we move forward and work towards finalizing the funding model, we remain committed to continuing our consultations with individuals, families and agencies that support people who are deaf-blind. I hope that this miscommunication will cease right now. I feel for the parents who are so upset about this false communication—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## CURRICULUM

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, last week, you said you were still consulting on sex ed curriculum, but the Minister of Research and Innovation says it is done and Premier McGuinty is moving ahead with controversial sex ed for kids as young as six after all.

Minister Murray is quoted as saying the reason the classes were pulled in the first place is that "some rural MPPs from less progressive ridings had difficulty selling the original curriculum to their conservative constituents."

Minister, are you going to show respect for Ontario families and come clean with your plans for sex ed or are you going to wait until after the next election?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I have indicated in this assembly that we have a process where we review all curriculum, following the process, and we followed that process with the physical and health education curriculum. However, parents and members of our communities made it very clear that they wanted a different type of consultation. So what our government decided to do is we have delivered the physical and health education part of the curriculum. We have kept the new sex education curriculum back. There is a sex education curriculum in our schools. There has been for many years. We are now working at my ministry to understand how we can improve upon the process that has been in place, the process that is used for every other curriculum document that we have in our schools. We are considering ways to improve that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** The Minister of Research also showed that he learned nothing from his inflammatory posts on Twitter and has no respect for Ontario families. Despite the Premier saying publicly that the reason for his backtrack on sex ed was that he hadn't consulted properly with parents, the Minister of Research says the real reason is: "Right-wing reactionary homophobes just love these issues."

Last time, the Minister of Research called the Prime Minister, our leader and Mayor Ford bigots. Days later he was finally forced to apologize. This time he's calling Ontario families who are worried about sex ed being taught to their six-year-olds homophobes.

Does the Minister of Education agree with her cabinet colleague that these worried Ontario families are homophobes?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Parents and families across Ontario know that we do have sex education curriculum in our schools. In fact, it was the curriculum that was brought in by the previous government. That is in place.

I would also offer that parents are very involved and engaged to understand what is being taught to their children in schools, and they're also very supportive of full-day kindergarten.

I share their concern when they hear the party opposite's position that they're going to cut education, that they're going to cut funding for full-day kindergarten. They are going to create have and have-not schools. That is what I am hearing from parents right across Ontario. They're very, very concerned that, like the crisis that was created when they were in government before, they are planning to create another crisis in education.

Our students are improving. We have more graduates. They want to create a crisis. We want to continue to invest in students—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1110

## LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. In the 2008 budget the McGuinty government promised to address staff shortages at long-term-care homes. They promised 2,500 new personal support workers and 2,000 new nurses. Yet in 2011, the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors reports that only 56% of the PSW positions and 31% of the nursing positions have been allocated. Adequate staffing levels are the backbone of a healthy long-term-care system, so why has the Premier failed to deliver on this important promise?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. What I can tell you is that this government is completely committed to improving long-term care in this province. Some of us will remember that when we took office, the quality of care in long-term-care homes was simply unacceptable to family members and to the people in care. We have significantly enhanced funding; in fact, we've increased funding in long-term care by 68%. We're spending \$1 billion more now on long-term care than when we took office. Part of that expenditure is on new staff, and we are absolutely committed to continue improving the quality of care. That includes adding staff in our long-term-care homes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** We all know that adequate staffing levels translate into good care. Inadequate staffing levels translate into less care for Ontario's most vulnerable, the seniors who live in our long-term-care homes. On July 1 last year, new regulations were put into place meant to improve nutritional management and food services, and this is a good thing. But the province has only allocated 43% of the funding necessary for the long-term-care homes to meet those new requirements. Like PSW and nurses, dietician, nutrition and foodservices personnel are desperately needed. Why are long-term-care homes across Ontario being forced to cope with broken promises while our seniors go without?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I completely reject the premise that our seniors are going without. In fact, the quality improvements in our long-term care are nothing short of astonishing. We are learning every day about improvements in our long-term-care sector. Fewer people are falling; fewer people are suffering with pressure ulcers; fewer people are suffering from depression as a result of the changes we are making in our long-term-care homes.

The contrast with the NDP is rather stunning. The last time they were in office they actually hiked the fees for almost 50,000 seniors by \$330 per month. In their final budget they actually decreased funding to long-term care. I think the contrast between what they did when they had the chance and what we are doing is stark and I'm proud of it.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. David Ramsay:** I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. I'd like to say to the minister that one of the biggest challenges I'm having, and my municipalities in the north and my riding, is how do we manage all the growth that is coming as a result of all the mining exploration in the industry? In Matachewan, Kirkland Lake and Cochrane we are having to build subdivisions and handle the accommodation needs of all these mines. We're fortunate this is a result of all the exploration work that has happened over the years. I'd like to ask the minister how we're going to be able to continue that exploration activity in northern Ontario.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** That is just a great question, and I thank the member for the question. He is so right. The opportunities for exploration are enormous. We are very proud of Ontario's mining sector and we're committed to ensuring it continues to grow to benefit all Ontarians, but particularly those in northern Ontario. That's why I'm so excited to officially open the Ontario Pavilion at the prospectors and developers association convention today, where I'll be meeting with stakeholders all across the globe to promote investment in Ontario's mining sector and officially announce some new regulations under the act.

The member is quite right: Spending on exploration in Ontario continues to grow every year. In 2010 it was over \$800 million. This year, it's forecasted to grow to over \$950 million; again, I think real evidence of what an attractive destination Ontario is for investment in the mining sector.

This is a very exciting time. Our challenges are sometimes based on the need to take advantage of those opportunities, and certainly in the mining sector in northern Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. David Ramsay:** As a northern member, I understand the importance of the PDAC conference as being the world's foremost mining conference. We're glad that it's always hosted here in Toronto. I would look forward, during the week, to hearing results from that, and I would also like to ask the minister what else we're doing to ensure that Ontario has the best investment climate for the mining industry.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Again, thank you to the member for the question. PDAC is an extraordinary event. There are over 100 countries that are represented and well over 20,000 delegates from the mining sector present at PDAC. Certainly, we want to try to strengthen our own relationships and build some new relationships with industry and with the global mining partners, showing them that Ontario's mineral industry remains one of the most competitive in the world.

Last night, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and I held a reception to welcome Chile, an extraordinary event. I had some meetings with China as

well. I met with the governor of Armenia this morning. The fact is that Ontario's mining sector is of great interest all across the globe, and we want to continue to take advantage of that.

The fact is that we are producing well over \$8 billion in terms of mineral production in the province of Ontario. We're going to continue to work very hard to secure our position of prominence in the world of sustainable mineral development.

## SMART METERS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'll direct my question to the Minister of Energy and we'll get his advice on something. He seems to not understand the distinction, I suppose.

In the last decade, thousands of new subdivisions have been built across Ontario in communities like Mississauga, Vaughan, Ottawa and Kitchener-Waterloo. These houses received brand new hydro meters with a lifespan of over 25 years. Minister, what happened to those brand new hydro meters when you had them ripped off those houses in order to install your smart meter tax machines? What happened to those meters, Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to go back somewhere else for advice. He's asking me for advice; I want to go somewhere else for advice, because it wasn't long ago that the member opposite had this to say: "Ontario needs an energy plan and the leadership to see it through. Not having a ... plan is just wasting precious time."

That was said by the member opposite, and I have to agree with that. I think he and his leader are wasting the precious time of Ontario energy consumers, of Ontario families, because, for some reason, they're afraid to share their plan with Ontario families. Maybe it's because they don't support our clean energy benefit that's taking 10% off their bills. Maybe it's because they don't support our plan to get off of dirty coal, clean up our air and provide a healthier future for their kids. Maybe it's the thousands of jobs we're creating. But for some reason, that member and his leader are afraid to share their plan—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Maybe he doesn't want to answer the question.

The Minister of Energy keeps talking about his plan, yet he continues to tear pages out on a daily basis as he backtracks on significant portions of that plan. They don't have a plan beyond the next election.

Last week, the Ontario PC caucus revealed that the bill to install your smart meter tax machines had reached \$1 billion as of September 10, 2010. When asked, you tried to justify this billion-dollar expense by claiming that it was time to replace many meters anyway—except that's not actually the case. In brand new subdivisions across Ontario, you are ripping brand new hydro meters off of new homes and replacing them with your smart meter tax machines, only to then send the billion-dollar bill to Ontario families.

Why did you say that it was time to replace those meters when, clearly, it wasn't? Minister, why don't you just try answering a question for a change?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Again, if the member doesn't want to take our advice or doesn't agree with our plan to modernize our energy system, maybe he should take the advice of the Environmental Commissioner, because this is what he said about smart meters: "They are necessary, absolutely necessary"—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Oxford will withdraw the comment that he just made.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This is what the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario said about smart meters: "They are necessary, absolutely necessary for the proper functioning and future functioning of the distribution system for electricity."

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This is what he said about the little piece of their plan that they put out on smart meters: "It has been proposed to let people choose whether to pay a flat rate for their electricity, or have time-of-use pricing. I believe this would be short-sighted." He's talking about your idea. Going back to the same old same old that did not work before is not the answer.

I agree with the Environmental Commissioner. I think the people of Ontario are going to take his word over yours any day of the week.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Members on both sides, please come to order. I want to be able to hear the questions.

New question.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Before the last election, the McGuinty Liberals promised to redevelop the former Grace hospital site into a long-term-care home, but it still sits vacant, abandoned and rotting, and that broken promise is frustrating families and health care professionals. It has led to a crisis at local emergency rooms and cancelled surgeries. When will Windsor families see shovels in the ground at the former Grace site?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member for the question. This is an issue that we are very much focused on. We are very anxious to get this building built and people into this long-term-care home as quickly as possible.

Windsor does now have additional long-term capacity. The 192-bed Village of Aspen Lake opened on January 3. Residents are moving in, as we speak, into that home. Sixty interim beds will be opened at Leamington Court retirement residence in the coming weeks, which is very, very good news for the people of the Windsor area. And

22 new complex continuing care beds are to open at the Malden Park continuing care site.

So we are working hard to expand capacity in the Windsor area, and I think we should all agree that we've made some great progress.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Almost a month ago, the Minister of Health promised that she would review the final plans for the Grace redevelopment within 20 days. After years of delays, she promised to "accelerate" the process. But work is still not under way.

After years of broken promises, how much longer will Windsor families have to wait to see work started on the Grace hospital site?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** In fact, I'm very pleased to report that the developer has submitted the working drawings. We have reviewed them. I did undertake that we would do it as quickly as we could, and that work is now done. So we are moving as quickly as possible, as quickly as is responsible, to get this home completed for the people in the Windsor area.

I think it's very important to note that health care is a whole lot better in Windsor now than it was when we took office. We have, as I said in the initial question, significantly more long-term-care capacity. We've got significant reduction in wait times.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Don't forget angioplasty.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** My seatmate here has reminded me of improvements in angioplasty.

We've been able to bring down wait times substantially, we've got far more access to primary health care in Windsor and we look forward to this project continuing.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, I thought one thing we all agreed on in this House was making sure that our kids had clean air to breathe. The opposition's call for a moratorium on renewable energy shows that's not the case. We know they didn't believe in it eight years ago, when they increased coal emissions 124%.

My constituents in Richmond Hill know that developing renewable energy is the right thing to do for cleaner air and more local jobs. But they want to know if it is true that once a company announces a new project, the municipality and the public have no say.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I say to my friend, the Green Energy Act says that the Ministry of the Environment has the final say, but my ministry will say no unless the municipality and the public have their say. It is enshrined in the act: mandatory consultation with municipalities and the public.

Our new approvals process allows for a more transparent, open and predictable process for companies, for municipalities and all Ontarians. We view municipal and public consultation as essential to the entire process. That's why we built it into the process. There are no limits to the amount of concerns that can be raised by muni-

cipalities or the public, and the proponent, the company that wants to put up the wind turbines, has to address the issues that are raised. If municipalities do not participate in this process, my ministry will follow up with them and ask why.

We're serious about developing green energy in a way that protects human health and the natural environment, and has—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Minister, I know that my constituents will be pleased to hear you correct the misconception. I'm glad to hear you confirm that there are clear setbacks and a clear process for municipal consultation, and that the municipal consultation is embedded right in the approval process of any renewable project.

Some residents are also concerned, however, that our stringent 40-decibel limit for windmills might be exceeded and that there's nothing they can do about it. Minister, why are you unwilling or unable to follow up on these calls from local residents?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** Nothing could be farther from the truth. I can tell you that recently, my ministry did a sweep of the 15 largest wind turbine parks in the province of Ontario in regard to compliance. We are very serious, because we say to people, "We all have a right to clean air to breathe, but we all deserve a good night's sleep." That's why we have determined a noise limit of some 40 decibels, as recommended by the World Health Organization: because that is the upper limit of noise that is acceptable so that people can get a good night's sleep.

I tell the good people of Ontario: If you have a concern, my ministry is open 24/7, 365 days a year. They can call 1-800-268-6060 at any time. And I can tell the people who do call that we review every one of their complaints and that there are a number of actions we can take. My inspectors go out into the field. We meet with the wind turbine companies. We expect them to abide by the laws of Ontario, and if they do not we will place orders about them because they cannot be too noisy. People have—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. On Friday of last week you sent a press release to the Cambridge media declaring that Witmer and Martiniuk will scrap the all-day kindergarten program. As you know, this is factually incorrect. You know full well that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just would remind the honourable member that she needs to ask a question that speaks directly to the minister's portfolio.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** You know full well that the PC caucus has promised many times to maintain full-day kindergarten for families and fix the implementation issues we have heard—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. The members will please come to order.

Please continue.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I seem to have hit a raw nerve. I ask you: Why did you deliberately mislead the people of Cambridge?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I ask the member to withdraw the comment she just made, please.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I will, but the Minister of Culture said the same thing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Unequivocal withdrawal, please.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I withdraw.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** To the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I think the people of Ontario are very, very interested to understand what the party opposite does intend to do. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition was in Peterborough last week, and he made it very clear that if, after the next election, he would be in a position to make a decision, there would be no moving forward. So I think it's time that the opposition comes clean.

We are committed to making sure we have full-day kindergarten in every school by 2014, and I would challenge the Leader of the Opposition to stand in his place and make the same kind of commitment to the children of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I would go again to the Minister of Infrastructure. You know full well that we have promised to maintain the program, but we're also going to fix the implementation issues. So the reality is, your comments—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock, please. Come to order.

1130

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

These comments, which are factually not correct, are an indication of desperation on the part of this government. Minister, will you apologize to the House and to the people of Cambridge for deliberately not telling them the truth?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd ask the honourable member to withdraw that last comment, please.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I will withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I would remind the honourable member of what she said on Focus Ontario, February 20. The honourable member—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order. The minister is to my right and I'm having difficulty hearing her.

Minister?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** The honourable member said on Focus Ontario, February 20, with respect to full-

day kindergarten, "... there are many, many competing programs and we can't do everything."

The Leader of the Opposition said in Peterborough Friday that they were going to have to look at the books before they would make any commitment with respect to full-day kindergarten beyond what's going to be in schools this fall.

Our government is committed to full-day kindergarten by 2014. The people on the other side have a history. Their idea of supporting education is to create a crisis. Families in Ontario have had enough of that. Our government invests in students. We invest in student achievement—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Oxford will please come to order.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Tell the truth.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Kitchener–Waterloo will please withdraw the comment she just made.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Withdraw.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Just quoting from you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of Finance, it's not helpful.

Minister?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Their plan is to create have and have-not schools and we are not doing that on this side. We are committed to full-day kindergarten for all children by 2014. That's what parents have told us they wanted. That's what we're committed to. Can the Leader of the Opposition stand in his place and tell us that he's prepared to do the same thing?

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. The government is revising the special diet allowance so that eligible conditions will be based on medical need, but it seems to have a lot more to do with the cost and cutting costs. Last week, I raised the diabetes association's concerns that pre-diabetes is being cut from the special diet allowance.

This week, the Ontario Lung Association wrote, concerned about another group of Ontarians being excluded: sufferers of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD. If the new schedule is based on medical need, why is the government ignoring the advice of key health organizations about who should be receiving the allowance?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The members of the opposition always raise the question, and when I verify who will continue to receive the special diet allowance with the continuation of the program, they either were not receiving it before or they will continue to receive it.

We do not want to disadvantage people who truly need a special diet to manage their medical condition. That's why we are changing the program so that it's accountable and fair to taxpayers and to those who need a special diet. We will be taking a different approach than

what we announced in the last budget. This government is proceeding with the first major social assistance review in 20 years and this is part of the social assistance review.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** This minister just doesn't get it. About 750,000 Ontarians suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD. They struggle with every-day activities like walking up stairs. Canadian guidelines say that sufferers of COPD who lose weight need a special diet. Otherwise, their condition will likely get worse and they will need more intensive and expensive medical care.

Why won't the minister listen to the Ontario Lung Association and include COPD in the special diet allowance?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Again, who is included and what medical conditions are included in the special diet is the decision of experts.

It's not a decision that we take lightly. We do recognize that, for certain conditions, the experts are telling us that a special diet is appropriate for that condition and we are listening to them. The review of social assistance, the two experts—it's part of their mandate to advise us on what we should do.

We cannot ignore the recommendations from the Auditor General. When the Auditor General is saying that there is abuse in the system, we have to look into it. We know that this program went from—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, better public transit means a better quality of life for Ontario families. Part of that goal is to make transit available to as many Ontarians as possible. My constituents understand that an increase in the use of public transit has the added benefit of improving our air quality by cutting down on harmful emissions and relieving the \$6 billion in congestion problems we are faced with in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

This past Friday, I had the opportunity to do the official opening of a new and improved GO station in Pickering. It makes it easier and more convenient for my constituents in Pickering to access public transit. This is the first of the new LEED-certified stations including geothermal heating and air conditioning. The improvements include an expanded kiss-and-ride section, and a new covered walkway is being prepared now to cross over to the Pickering Town Centre.

Speaker, through you, would the minister inform the House what the McGuinty government has done to improve public transit throughout Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I thank the member for his question and for his advocacy on public transit.

Since we came to office, we have made enormous investments in public transit because we really believe that it is the answer to dealing with congestion on our

roads—and we are playing catch-up on this file, because the previous government made very little to no investments in public transit in the eight years that they were in office.

GO Transit now typically, on a workday, takes 90,000 cars off the road. It eases congestion. Since 2003, we have invested more than \$10.8 billion in public transit, including \$4.7 billion in GO. We've opened seven new GO train stations. We've increased access to public transit in places like Barrie, Georgetown and Stouffville; we've opened three new bus terminals in Mississauga, Guelph and Hamilton; and by the end of 2011, we will have delivered GO train service to Kitchener–Waterloo.

These investments are making a huge difference to the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended.

### USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I rise on a point of order with respect to questions directed by the Leader of the Opposition today to first the Premier and then the Minister of Energy, but all questions were answered by the Minister of Energy—or, at least, addressed.

The minister used today the term “advised” Hydro One. I have the Hansard from February 23, and on no less than six occasions, the minister—and I will quote: “We have directed,” or “We’ve directed,” or “Hydro One has been directed.”

I would offer the Minister of Energy the opportunity to correct his record in saying today that he “advised” Hydro One when, in fact, in the Hansard from that day—and I will send you a copy of the Hansard, Mr. Speaker—on no less than six occasions, he used the term “We’ve directed Hydro One” not to pass on these costs with respect to the court case. I would ask the minister to correct his—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

The honourable member is aware that any question that is directed to the Premier, the Premier, in his capacity, can direct to the appropriate minister, which the Premier did. It is not for the Speaker to judge the use of words of a minister that he or she would choose to use in the House. I'll leave that that there's a difference of opinion between the honourable member and the minister.

### DEFERRED VOTES

#### GOOD GOVERNMENT ACT, 2011

#### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA SAINE GESTION PUBLIQUE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 110, An Act to promote good government by amending

or repealing certain Acts / *Projet de loi 110, Loi visant à promouvoir une saine gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1140 to 1145.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members please take their seats.

In December 2010, Ms. Smith moved third reading of Bill 110.

All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Fonseca, Peter	Mitchell, Carol
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Gélinas, France	Murray, Glen R.
Bartolucci, Rick	Hampton, Howard	Naqvi, Yasir
Bentley, Christopher	Hoskins, Eric	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Prue, Michael
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	Sousa, Charles
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Duguid, Brad	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Duncan, Dwight	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Miller, Paul	

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Hillier, Randy	Quellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Savoline, Joyce
Chudleigh, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Wilson, Jim
Clark, Steve	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Elliott, Christine	Munro, Julia	Yakubuski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 50; the nays are 18.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1148 to 1300.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** I want to introduce a very special lady, Aneesha Joshi. She's here with her father, Mr. Rakesh Joshi, and her uncle Mr. Amanpreet Singh.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Welcome.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to deliver a message to this government from the people of Tillsonburg regarding hydro increases: Enough is enough.

Recently, the council of the town of Tillsonburg passed a resolution calling for hydro relief, which says: "The impact of harmonized sales tax on residential utility bills is placing an untenable burden with Ontario households." Mayor John Lessif said: "We're not happy with the decision to tax energy usage." Deputy Mayor Mark Renaud said: "Enough is enough."

According to the Tillsonburg News, Renaud also cited increasing costs on utility bills, including those of green energy initiatives and debt retirement, and suggested that money from the debt retirement is "being sourced for other uses."

I want to commend the Tillsonburg council for standing up for their constituents and acknowledging the challenges that these hydro increases are causing for Oxford families. I've heard concerns about spiralling hydro bills at events and in coffee shops across my riding and from the people in neighbouring communities like St. Thomas and Stratford.

This government doesn't seem to understand the effect that their misguided policies like green energy, HST and smart meters are having on Ontario's families. Clearly they are out of touch with the reality Ontario's families are facing. I've heard from constituents who are already doing everything that this government has recommended in order to keep their energy bills low but still their hydro bills keep increasing.

On behalf of the people of Oxford, I want to deliver the message that the hydro increases need to stop. Enough is enough.

## OTTAWA BEAR HUG

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Last spring, some 10,557 students from across Ottawa locked their arms around each other's waists to form a human chain around the Rideau Canal. The event was organized by staff and students at St. Matthew high school in Orléans to try to win back the title of world's largest bear hug, which they had originally set in 2004.

The logistics needed to pull off such a task were awe-inspiring. More than 270 buses were needed to transport more than 10,000 students to the Rideau Canal. Once everyone was in place, a horn sounded and students had to hold their position without breaking the chain for a minimum of 10 seconds. A helicopter circled overhead with the Guinness adjudicator inside, along with a small team of volunteers who took several photos and video which could be used to authenticate the attempt.

Tomorrow night, a representative from Guinness World Records will present a certificate to the Ottawa

Catholic School Board recognizing Ottawa Bear Hug III as a new official world record.

I'm sure you'll join me in congratulating the organizers and participants of the event which, besides setting a new world record, raised over \$500,000 for a number of charities, including Roger's House, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation and the Ottawa Hospital.

The very first bear hug was organized at St. Matthew high school in 2004. The event was inspired by grade 8 student Erin Gannon, who passed away shortly afterwards, following a year-long battle with cancer.

It is these types of selfless philanthropic efforts that go a long way to develop well-rounded future members of our society and this great province.

## HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** For years now, working with successive councils of the township of Puslinch, I have repeatedly called upon the Minister of Transportation to place the Highway 6 Morriston bypass on the ministry's five-year plan. The question is this: Will this government ever recognize the need to build this vital new road to relieve the worst traffic congestion in our part of Ontario?

We've talked about this project for some 30 years. We've made our case time and time again. The environmental assessment has been completed. The consultations have concluded. The route is planned. Property acquisition should commence, but we need to know when construction will begin.

In February and April of last year, I invited the Minister of Transportation to Puslinch township to meet with council to hear their views on this matter. When she finally did get around to visiting Wellington-Halton Hills on December 3 to try to raise money for the local provincial Liberal riding association, she initiated meetings with at least two of our local municipal councils. But even though she was taking the better part of the day to come to my riding, she didn't even give Puslinch township the time of day. If they had wanted to meet her, they would have had to write a cheque to pay for the privilege.

But there is still time this year for this government to finally do the right thing when it comes to the Morriston bypass. In the next budget, the McGuinty Liberals will have their last chance to finally acknowledge the people of the township of Puslinch and the community of Morriston. They have waited long enough for this new highway that they deserve. Clearly, that time has come.

## COMMUNITY AWARDS

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** On March 3, the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, also known as OCISO, hosted its annual awards gala. This was OCISO's third annual Community Awards of Excellence, which recognize and honour the outstanding contributions of individuals and organizations that have positively

impacted the lives of refugees and immigrants in our community.

Ayda Khan, a high school student and talented singer who performs in six languages, and donates some of her honorarium to her school's breakfast club, was given the award for youth leadership.

Charanjit Wadehra, a retired teacher and busy volunteer who has contributed countless hours to a variety of causes, including the Kanata Seniors' Centre, where he is on the board of directors, was awarded the "Heroes Among Us" award.

L'Ecole secondaire publique Omer-Deslauriers was presented with the organizational leadership award for its assistance to newcomer families.

Juniper Networks was honoured for its sponsorship support and employee participation in mentoring skilled immigrants.

The event was a great success. I want to give a big thank you and congratulations to Nishith Göel, who is the president and CEO of Cistel Technology Inc. and who was the chair of the gala; Tyler Meredith, the president of OCISO's board; and Hamdi Mohamed, the executive director, for all their good work in our community and making the lives of immigrants and refugees in Ottawa a more positive experience. Thank you very much.

#### LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Today, I'm very proud to be helping to sponsor Lakehead University's first annual lobby day here at Queen's Park. With us today, seated in the members' gallery, are Dr. Brian Stevenson, president and vice-chancellor of Lakehead; Lee Gould, vice-president of external relations; Richard Longtin, the manager of government relations; Mary Silk, my executive assistant from my office in Orillia; and, of course, Gaggan Gill, who everyone knows down here.

The intent today is to promote the fact that Lakehead University, with over 8,000 students in Ontario, now has a southern Ontario presence, and it's located in Orillia. We like to call it central Ontario's university because it's been an exciting institution to welcome to our part of the province. We have excellent professors there, the community has received it with open arms, and there's just an excitement and vibrancy around this beautiful new facility that we have in the beautiful riding of Simcoe North.

Today, I'd like to say to everyone—I know I have a number of appointments today and tomorrow, but I'd like to welcome everybody here to the reception in the legislative dining room tonight between 5 and 7, yourself included, Mr. Speaker; we'd love to see you there—to welcome these people to Queen's Park and to see just how wonderful Lakehead University is in Ontario.

#### VICTIM SERVICES TORONTO

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I rise today to draw attention to the plight of Victim Services Toronto, which provides

support to victims throughout this city. Established in 1990, it has been available 24 hours, seven days a week, for two decades. It's the first-response agency and the only agency in Toronto providing immediate assistance to victims of crime and sudden tragedies.

This service, which has provided critical and irreplaceable support to the people of the city, has not had a core funding increase in the last two decades, except for 2007. They face profound problems in delivering the services that have to be delivered. I rise today to call on the government to examine the funding of this agency, this critical service, and to act to ensure that they are viable, properly funded and able to help those in this city who are victims of crime.

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#### BUSINESS AWARDS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise in the House today and tell you that the 16th annual Oakville business awards took place last Wednesday evening. These awards, called the Oakville Awards for Business Excellence, are hosted by the Rotary Club of Oakville West, along with the Oakville Chamber of Commerce. The companies are judged not only on business performance but on the contribution they make to the community.

It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature today to congratulate the six winners. They are: Blazing Design for entrepreneur of the year; Geoff Shore at the Cross Avenue Tim Hortons, who took home the environmental leadership business of the year award; Shred-it, for large business of the year; Philthy McNasty's, which won the restaurant of the year award; the small business of the year award went to Speers Road Broadloom and Florence Meat Supplies; and Kicks for Kids won for professional service provider of the year.

I'd like to recognize the generous contributions from the sponsors who continue to support the Rotary Club of Oakville West. To date, the awards gala has raised more than \$500,000, and that supports Oakville's youth through a variety of programs.

Once again, I rise in the House to congratulate all those who were nominated and those who won last Wednesday evening, and the sponsors for their contribution to our great community.

#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. David Ramsay:** On Friday of last week, it was a great pleasure to go to the New Liskeard Public School to launch the second-year expansion of full-day kindergarten for four-year-olds and five-year-olds. It was a real pleasure for me. I wore my get-down-on-my-knees pants that day to get down with the kids. They allowed me to share in their activities. It was a very fun experience, and it was just gratifying to see the children of my constituents having this opportunity.

The obvious investment here is for the children, and it's one of the best things we can do to invest this early in

their learning years, but it's also a wonderful economic advantage to many of my constituents who would find it challenging to find daycare for four-year-olds and be able to pay for that. They're getting good early learning from this, which we're very pleased about.

It was a great experience. This, now, would mean that about 720 students would be taking advantage of this by September this year, with about a 50% rollout of that. I, and the rest of my parents, look forward to the rest of that rollout so that their children will have a great opportunity to learn in the future.

## MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Earlier this week, all of us in this place welcomed the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, or ROMA, and the Ontario Good Roads Association to Toronto for their annual conference. It was indeed a great success this year. It got me thinking about how much the position of Ontario's municipalities has improved under the McGuinty government.

Before 2003, our communities suffered from eight years of cuts, neglect and downloading. The previous Conservative government downloaded public services, cut all funding for transit and let developers pave over huge areas of green space while cancelling 17,000 units of public housing. They got out of the game. They dumped maintenance costs for roads and bridges on our cities, along with public health, social assistance, social housing and ambulance services. These decisions increased the pressure on municipal budgets and the property tax burden of Ontario families.

The McGuinty government, on the other hand, has worked closely with municipalities to fairly share the cost of governing. We've uploaded the cost of public health to 75%, the cost of land ambulance to 50% and added \$1.5 billion in social assistance benefits. We've invested \$2.5 billion in affordable housing, \$30 billion in rebuilding public infrastructure in our cities, and \$28 billion, along with the federal government, to improve infrastructure and create jobs.

We helped families and municipalities impacted by the recent recession. Unlike the previous government, which let city governments fend for themselves—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## PETITIONS

### OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a pleasure to present a petition on behalf of my constituents of the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier government to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permit process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Minister of the Environment initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the Oak Ridges moraine until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to prevent contamination of the Oak Ridges moraine" from affecting our water aquifer.

I'm pleased to present this to Brittany, one of the pages.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a petition, a very short one, that reads as follows.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax."

Signed by hundreds of people in the Windsor area.

## PARAMEDICS

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

Of course, I'm signing this one.

## HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** A petition to the Ontario Legislature:

"The province's plan to terminate phase-one construction of Highway 407 at Simcoe Street, Oshawa, is a mistake. It is a plan that does not make economic sense, will create end-of-line gridlock, will be detrimental to our rural community and have a significant negative effect on commuters, businesses, tourism, public transit, the historic hamlet of Columbus and all citizens of Durham region.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend the Highway 407 extension eastward and not terminate it at Simcoe Street."

I'm pleased to sign this and send it to the table with page Benjamin.

### TAXATION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I have a petition here keenly signed by people, both on the front and the back, which I've not seen in a long time. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty take the unfair HST off hydro and home heating bills."

It's signed by many people, and I will send it down with Braden.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows.

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in serving Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and give it to page Hailey.

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government's announcement regarding the eastward extension of Highway 407 indicates construction will end at Oshawa;

"Whereas ending the highway at Oshawa will mean undue traffic on smaller roads leading to Highway 407, while delaying the benefits of a completed Highway 407 for commuters, businesses, tourism, public transit and all stakeholders;

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"Whereas the environmental assessment has not considered impacts of a partial completion of the highway; and

"Whereas the completion of the eastern extension of Highway 407 to Highway 35/115 is supported by citizens, businesses, communities and elected representatives.

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the eastward extension of Highway 407 to Highway 35/115 in a single stage, as promised by the Dalton McGuinty government in previous infrastructure announcements. We request that Premier McGuinty respond with a commitment for the completion of Highway 407 by a specific date," before the election in 2011.

I'm pleased to present this to page Ira.

### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from IBEW local 115, from Kingston. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Oliver to bring it to the Clerk.

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"The province's plan to terminate phase-one construction of Highway 407 at Simcoe Street, Oshawa, is a

mistake. It is a plan that does not make economic sense, will create end-of-line gridlock, will be detrimental to our rural community and have a significant negative effect on commuters, businesses, tourism, public transit, the historic hamlet of Columbus and all citizens of Durham region.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend the Highway 407 extension eastward and not terminate it at Simcoe Street."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of the constituents in the riding of Durham.

#### MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a much longer petition this time, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, in May 2009, a petition was presented to the Legislature and read by MPP O'Toole, where approximately 1,000 residents of Vaughan begged the Minister of Municipal Affairs to appoint an auditor to audit the finances of Vaughan. The Minister of Municipal Affairs responded, 'Vaughan is a well-run city,' and refused to intervene;

"Whereas the 2009 petition brought several matters to the attention of the minister, including taxpayers charged approximately \$750,000 in legal costs where 200 charges were filed against three then sitting members of council and where these charges are now thrown out of court because the charges were filed too late; a regional councillor gave a \$30,000 contract to family with no competitive bids and subsequently millions found to be awarded without tender to her son; council continues to spend millions to pay legal fees for lawsuits;

"Whereas, since the 2010 election, the situation has grown significantly worse with continuing tax increases and continuing abuse of tax dollars and where this abuse now proves the early intervention by the minister would have prevented the continuing abuse of taxpayer money, and saved at least \$15 million of wasted money;

"Whereas, in a recent meeting of council, it was now admitted by the senior staff that Vaughan city hall is more than \$15 million over budget, and where the same staff reported immediately before the election that city hall was on budget;

"Whereas another lawsuit has revealed documents that show previous council approved \$50,000 in expenses for one of the election audits in the absence of a court order and in a closed meeting of council, when on the face of the invoices the outstanding amount was less than half the amount and whereas on the face of the invoices, the money was used by the same external lawyer to attempt to get Mayor Jackson removed from office using a conflict of interest application;

"Whereas the old council voted to use \$80 million of taxpayer money to purchase land for a hospital and placed the control in the hands of a private not-for-profit corporation, the Vaughan Health Campus of Care, and subsequently the VHCC has sued several residents for

public deputations of concern and where the province has appointed York Central Hospital as the entity to build the hospital and the VHCC agreement needs to be nullified and all donations given to the YCH;

"We, the taxpayers and ratepayers of the city of Vaughan, exercise our right and again petition the minister to appoint an auditor to complete a forensic municipal audit of the city of Vaughan's financial affairs from 2003 to present and publicly report to the residents of Vaughan."

I am in agreement and would sign my name thereto.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I seem to be the custodian of all petitions here today. This one is from the riding of Durham.

"This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario families are struggling to help put their kids through university;

"Whereas students in Ontario graduate with an average \$26,000 in debt and have the highest tuition and largest class sizes in the country; and

"Whereas Ontario tax dollars should be kept in Ontario to help Ontario students, not sent overseas;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly to call on the McGuinty government to cancel its plan to give foreign students scholarships of \$40,000 a year and reinvest these funds in scholarships for Ontario students."

I'm pleased to sign and present this to Benjamin, one of the pages here.

#### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'ai une pétition qui me vient de l'unité 61 du Moyen-Nord de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens et de son président, M. Conrad Mazerolle :

« Attendu que la mission du commissaire aux services en français est de veiller à ce que la population reçoive en français des services de qualité du gouvernement de l'Ontario et de surveiller l'application de la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que le commissaire a le mandat de mener des enquêtes indépendantes selon la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que contrairement au vérificateur général, à l'ombudsman, au commissaire à l'environnement et au commissaire à l'intégrité qui, eux, relèvent de l'Assemblée législative, le commissaire aux services en français relève de la ministre déléguée aux services en français;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu'il relève directement de l'Assemblée législative. »

J'appuie cette pétition. Je vais signer mon nom et demander à Nicolas de l'amener au greffier.

## HOSPITAL FUNDING

1330

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Again, it's a real privilege to be reading here today. This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government-appointed local health integration network (LHIN) has approved a budget proposal by the Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) that includes plans to close 26 hospital beds, outpatient rehabilitation and the diabetes education clinic; and

"Whereas these cuts will leave no outpatient rehabilitation (including physio- and occupational therapy) available for patients in Northumberland county; and

"Whereas this cut leaves all patients with insulin-dependent diabetes without education and support that is vital to prevent serious health decline; and

"Whereas these cuts will result in for-profit privatization of hospital beds and services and new user fees for patients; and

"Whereas private, for-profit, unaccredited retirement homes are not safe or appropriate to house patients who need professional nursing and health care; and

"Whereas the NHH is considered a very efficient hospital in comparison with peer hospitals and the people of west Northumberland have already made a huge sacrifice regarding hospital services;

"Therefore be it resolved:

"That the McGuinty government act immediately to protect patients in Northumberland Hills, fund the hospital to maintain the current services, and stop the hospital bed and service cuts."

I am pleased to sign and support this, and I hope Lou Rinaldi will sign it as well.

## REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from Mr. Barry Fajcz, president of CUPW Local 598. It reads as follows:

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Alexandra to bring it to the Clerk.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION  
LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT,  
2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT  
DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL  
À LA COMMISSION DE TRANSPORT  
DE TORONTO

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 1, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission / Projet de loi 150, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail à la Commission de transport de Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated Thursday, March 3, 2011, I am now required to put the question.

On February 24, 2011, Mr. Sousa moved second reading of Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I have received a request that the vote on Bill 150, the Toronto Transit Commission Labour Disputes Resolution Act, 2011, be deferred. This vote will be deferred until Tuesday, March 8, following question period.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

ONTARIO FOREST TENURE  
MODERNIZATION ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA MODERNISATION  
DU RÉGIME DE TENURE FORESTIÈRE  
EN ONTARIO

Mr. Gravelle moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur la modernisation du régime de tenure forestière en Ontario et modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur la durabilité des forêts de la Couronne.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I am honoured to lead off debate on Bill 151, the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, legislation that would enable us to change the forest tenure system, allowing for greater use of

competitive markets in the allocation and the pricing of crown timber.

No one here questions the value of the contribution that our province's forest industry makes to the lives of all Ontarians, whether directly through employment or indirectly through the vast array of Ontario wood products that contribute to our province's high standard of living.

The fact is that Ontario has approximately 85 billion trees, and our forests represent 2% of the world's total. Eighty per cent of the 71 million hectares of forested land in Ontario is publicly owned. The government of Ontario oversees the management of these crown forests, including commercial logging on more than 26 million hectares.

Ontario's forest sector is a key and important component of the province's economy. In total it supports almost 200,000 direct and indirect jobs in more than 260 Ontario communities. Of these communities, 40 are categorized as highly dependent on employment in the forest sector to survive, and an additional 63 are identified as being moderately dependent.

In 2008, the value of Ontario's forestry sector products was \$14 billion, the majority of which was pulp and paper products—that's about \$8 billion; saw-mill engineered wood and other wood product manufacturing was valued at \$3.9 billion; and furniture and kitchen cabinet manufacturing represented about \$2.1 billion. The importance of our forests to the province's economic future is absolutely clear.

Having said that, the difficulties that the sector has endured in recent years are also well-known. Despite the serious setbacks for the industry in recent years, the underlying advantages of Ontario's forest sector remain intact. We have a large sustainable supply of quality fibre and we have excellent infrastructure. We have a solid primary sector with reasonable proximity to markets. May I say, the forest industry is working very hard to use these advantages to create and develop new business opportunities.

Our government is equally committed to working with all interested parties to restore the forest sector's competitiveness. We want to create the best environment possible for Ontario's forest product businesses to succeed, while balancing this with sustainable practices. One of the ways that we are proposing to do this is by modernizing the forest tenure and the timber pricing system. We believe that modernizing the system by which forest resources are made available to industry is one of the keys to transforming the sector. In the challenges that the industry has faced in recent years, businesses have certainly looked to government for support to help them continue to operate, and we have indeed responded.

Since 2005, we have made available more than \$1.1 billion to support the forestry sector through programs like the forest sector prosperity fund and the loan guarantee program, the northern pulp and paper electricity transition program and its successor, of course, the

northern industrial energy rate program. We must also not forget about the very helpful provincial roads funding program. However, if we expect the forest sector to adapt to change and thrive in the face of the challenges that they have, the current tenure system, which describes essentially how companies get and pay for wood in this province, we believe also needs to change.

Let me explain briefly for all the members—some are certainly more familiar than others—how the current forest tenure and timber pricing system operates. The area of crown forest where harvesting is allowed is generally managed under sustainable forest licences issued in accordance with the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. These licences, or SFLs, as they are commonly called, are issued to companies which are generally mills to manage a defined forest management unit. Licence holders are required to complete a government-approved forest management plan. They're required to build roads and renew the forest after they've harvested it. Licensees are authorized to harvest and use timber from their defined management unit.

The current forest tenure system was designed many years ago. It was designed to give mills the responsibility to manage Ontario's forests in exchange for a long-term wood supply. As a consequence, access to the crown forest resource is essentially largely controlled by industry. I would say that this certainly may have worked in good times, when mills were profitable. However, in tougher times, when many of the mills were idle or were closed, it meant that frequently the wood was not being used, it was not being harvested, with limited opportunities for new entrants, those who were seeking access to that wood.

I want to be respectful here, but frankly, the current tenure system, as it is in place, in essence made it easy for some of these mills to hoard the wood that they cannot use. In essence, and very much at the base of the principle for this legislation, is that our government wants to put Ontario's wood and its people back to work. A major step we are taking towards this goal is to modernize the forest tenure and pricing system.

There's no question that this is a complex task. I'm going to hear from our critics on this and they are going to confirm that. It's a complex task. It requires significant changes affecting the allocating, the licensing and the pricing of crown forest resources. We fully appreciate our responsibility to continue to act with prudence and respect for the business entities that drive this key industry, especially those, may I say, who are using all the wood that is licensed to them.

We have taken a considerable time up front to consult with those who are most knowledgeable about and would be most affected by these proposed changes. When we embarked on this major review, we developed a discussion paper for public consultation. We asked for comments, over the fall of 2009, in a number of community and individual meetings and in consultation sessions with the public and a large number of aboriginal communities. We certainly heard that the current system had its

strengths, such as the forest renewal and forestry futures trust, that absolutely should be continued. But we also, I think it's only fair to say, heard a strong consensus that some change was needed. There certainly was an interest expressed in embracing market forces to better allocate and price our wood. People said they wanted a system that was more flexible and dynamic, a system that could respond and adapt to our rapidly changing times. Certainly, they wanted fairness and transparency to be a foundation of any new system, and they wanted our valuable forest resource to continue to be managed sustainably.

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Based on the first round of public consultations, we prepared a proposed framework. We set up further consultations in seven locations across the province, and it was a very interesting second round of consultations. During that second round, we provided opportunities to meet with aboriginal people and communities to inform them and to refine the proposal that we're bringing forward today. There's no question that these meetings generated a tremendous amount of discussion. During the spring of last year, I think we had something like 660 people individually taking part in those meetings, 260-plus sent written submissions and there were well over 100 who also responded online to our website.

We did continue to hear that change was needed. But to be absolutely fair and honest, we also heard that some of our proposed changes might create too much uncertainty in a struggling sector. I want you to know, Madam Speaker, that we listened extremely carefully to the feedback, we did revise our proposal to address that uncertainty and today we are presenting a modified approach to tenure reform. May I say that in those discussions that took place with major players in industry plus smaller players in industry—those who wanted to be new entrants—they were very helpful in helping us understand what was the best way to move forward, and that's what we are presenting to the Legislature today for debate and discussion.

Bill 151 would move us toward a forest tenure and pricing system that includes a greater use of competitive market mechanisms in the pricing and allocation of crown timber. It will include sustainable and self-financing forest management business entities with clear roles, responsibilities and accountability. Very importantly, it will have greater aboriginal and local regional involvement in the sector. Again—and something we think is very important, which was a challenge in the past—it will include opportunities for new entrants who had difficulty accessing fibre in the past.

First of all, Bill 151 would create a new act that, if passed, would enable the creation of local forest management corporations, or LFMCs. LFMCs would be established through subsequent regulation as crown agencies accountable to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. These local forest management corporations would retain the revenue from selling crown timber and use it to achieve their legislated corporate

objectives. These include investing revenue back into the forests.

LFMCs would certainly have to sell some of their timber through open market sales. The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry would use the data collected from that process, along with other data, to support the move to a more market-based pricing system, as opposed to the administrative pricing system we have today.

The local forest management corporations would also undertake forest management activities. They would market, sell and enable access to a competitive and predictable supply of crown forest resources. The LFMCs would be issued one or more sustainable forest licences and would be subject to all the terms and conditions of the licence. They would be mandated to operate in a businesslike fashion and sell forest resources to customers that would include both existing forest industry members and new entrants.

The goal here, again, is that their decisions would take into consideration local economic development—we heard a lot about that—and would provide real economic opportunities for aboriginal peoples and communities. In that regard, the local forest management corporation's board of directors would include representatives of aboriginal peoples and local communities.

It's important to point out that initially what we are looking at is the establishment of two local forest management corporations. Our goal, in essence, is to test the principles of our model through the local forest management corporations and learn from these initial LFMCs before we consider implementing the model more broadly. We're grateful to have support for these two models, these two LFMCs, to be put in place by industry themselves.

The second governance model is an important one as well, and it's a very interesting one. What we're looking to do is develop and implement a governance model that we're calling the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licence. With our colleagues at the Ministry of Natural Resources, we would be working very closely with the forest industry, other stakeholders and aboriginal peoples on the transition from the current SFL model to these enhanced shareholder SFLs, sustainable forest licences. Working together, we would establish criteria that would be used, certainly, to evaluate the performance of the local forest management corporations we hope to put in place and the enhanced shareholder SFLs over a period of time.

We would want to evaluate how each model of governance performs, both models of governance, in relation to our objectives for modernizing the forest tenure and timber pricing system. Collectively, we would use the evaluations to help us make improvements to the models along the way. That really is why we feel this is a responsible piece of legislation that does indeed put us in a position to change the way we look at our tenure and pricing system, but also does it in a measured and prudent way. In essence, we have listened to many of the concerns.

Again, I want to emphasize that we do have some goals in mind. Both governance models include the need for increased local and aboriginal community involvement in the forest industry. That was certainly a message that we heard consistently from our consultations.

Also, let me just remind everybody in the House and everybody who's listening that the SFL holders, including the local forest management corporations, the two models we hope to put in place, would still be required to comply with all forest management requirements under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act—for example, by paying into the forestry futures and forest renewal trust funds.

Under this governance model, the enhanced shareholder model, a professional forest management company would still be retained by the businesses that have a wood supply commitment on the licence area—that's the LFCs. The forest management corporation would work on their collective behalf and not on behalf of any one mill owner. In other words, with the enhanced model, we are going to be looking at the collective as being something that would actually make a real difference.

Certainly, I think it's fair to say that we want to see more separation between mill owners and those who manage our public forests. We believe that this will allow mills to focus on their core business of manufacturing forest products. It would also allow for greater opportunities for new businesses to purchase unused wood. Again, our goal, in the most precise way, is to put Ontario's wood to work.

Bill 151 also includes some amendments to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act to help modernize the forest tenure and pricing system. The proposed amendments would give us the tools that we believe we need to achieve our goals. These very much include discouraging hoarding of wood and also getting new entrants easier and better access into the sector. The proposed amendments include new authorities, like the authority to cancel licences and commitments in circumstances where a company is not making optimal use of the wood.

It's very important for me to say that these are not actions that would be taken in anything other than a serious manner. They would only be made upon the recommendation of the minister and certainly would need to be approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. But again, it's important to state that this is about our very strong goal of wanting to see our Ontario crown resources being used, being harvested and not being hoarded. We want to be able to see the wood actually being put to work.

May I say, too, that the current tenure system under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act as it stands now already provides the crown with certain powers related to the oversight of the management of the public forests.

I want to make it very, very clear that our consultation process has been extensive. We've had two levels of consultation. Obviously, we had prior consultation before we released our proposed model; then we looked at the proposed model and made some adjustments to that in

order to be sure that we were listening to our primary forest producers, as well as some of the smaller entrants. But this initiative is certainly going to need some time. It would be implemented over a period of time.

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We would expect, if we are successful in passage of this legislation, to see a shift from the current SFL model to the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licence. Perhaps after five to seven years, we would expect most of the crown forest to be managed by either local forest management corporations and/or enhanced shareholder SFLs, with, I think it's fair to say, the majority of the forest area managed under the enhanced shareholder SFL model, and a smaller portion under the LFCs.

But I will say that one of our goals here—and I'll be interested to hear a response from other members of the Legislature—is to potentially phase out the single-entity SFL whenever possible. Certainly if we are able to see successful passage of this legislation and we are able to move forward with our two new governance models and put in place the local forest management corporations—the two that we would like to see put forward to test the principles of our model, to see the enhanced shareholder SFLs move forward—we would see less wood hoarding, more wood sold on the open market and more opportunities for new businesses. Those are indeed our goals.

The legislation that we're beginning debate on today takes a truly measured and balanced approach. I was pleased to hear that from some of the leaders in the industry. The Ontario Forest Industry Association was able to be at an event where we spoke about this. They viewed it as a measured, balanced approach. We worked closely with them, as we did with much of industry.

The event in January was a really positive—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, they don't. They're mad at you. Jamie Lim—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** We were very pleased that they worked with us so closely, and we listened to their concerns.

Passage of this legislation would allow to us proceed with the modernization, and I think every member in the House knows we need to move in that direction. That's exactly what I would expect to see, that indeed the members on all sides of this House will recognize.

It has been incredibly carefully crafted after extensive public consultation, and may I say, we would continue to consult on the details and the implementation as we move forward. We know how important this is. We would certainly be evaluating elements of the framework, and we would make necessary modifications in specific areas. We'll have the opportunity to do that if we're able to move forward.

Let me again just emphasize, as I wrap up, the overarching principle as we proceed with forest tenure and pricing modernization is the government's commitment to the broader public interest. The tenure modernization framework that we are proposing is consistent with the government's ownership of and responsibility to manage

our valuable crown forest resource in a way that helps the local economies of forest-based communities across the province and on behalf of all Ontarians.

By getting forest tenure and pricing modernization right, we can ensure that forestry remains a vital component of the province's economy. With our proposed legislation, we have the opportunity to strengthen Ontario's position as a leading global forest jurisdiction. Let's put our wood to work.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the minister's remarks regarding Bill 151. There are a number of things, and hopefully I'll get a chance to get into the debate later on on this very topic. There are a lot of concerns.

You talk about the forest management corporations. We've seen the FMAs, SFLs and all the other aspects, and it's never really been able to pan out. Some of the key concerns are: How does this differ from Westwind and what's taking place in that particular area now? Is that not a working example of the forest corporations you're talking about that could be utilized as a model throughout the province of Ontario? It's an example of something that's already working and seems to work fairly well.

Some of the other concerns are the players and how this will play. The perspective is that it will benefit a lot of the big, key players, much like the mining industry. You've got the Ontario Mining Association, which is basically run by a small number of players in the province of Ontario. The juniors in the province don't get an opportunity to participate in the same fashion that this may assist the major forestry corporations and eat up all the small players that are around there.

The minister mentioned the fact they would have the ability to remove the licence. I'm not sure why that wasn't so much allowed before, where if there was a problem for underutilized fibre—and what about non-target fibre species that are in the province of Ontario? There's so many other fibres that are out there on an SFL where individuals want to use such things as larch or tamarack or cedars, and those areas—it could be utilized for other areas that aren't being included.

Not only that, what happens when individuals don't utilize the fibre? That is an ongoing thing on their cut plans, where all of a sudden there's a downturn in the economy, and they have an allocation of so many cubic units of fibre out there that they're expected to harvest. What's going to happen with that fibre when it's not harvested? Is it going to be made available or is it going to be retained in that licence until the economy turns around, in the eyes of the ministry? That's one of the key things. You have to watch the bureaucracy on this; that in the advice that comes forward, individuals within the bureaucracy will dictate how business will or will not be successful, and that should be done by the private sector.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm going to get a chance to speak to this more fully a little bit later, but my God, let's give our heads a shake. The minister is trying now to say that the reason this act has to be done is because he doesn't have the authority to use underutilized wood. Nothing could be so far away from reality. The current act, as drafted by Howard Hampton when he was the minister and has been the law even when Jerry Ouellette was the minister—and I can talk later about a story he and I dealt with—has the authority for the minister to take wood that's not being used.

The difference is, you don't—under the current law that was created, you can't just cancel a licence at a whim. You're giving yourself the authority inside this bill—and I'm going to read it in a second—the minister could go up to a company and say, "Even though you're meeting the conditions of your licence, I can take your wood away and I can cancel your licence." How is any forest company going to finance itself when it comes to getting money to do renovation in their mill or an expansion to their mill if they can't show they have secure access to fibre?

Let me read what the act says, Minister. You say, under section 41, "On the recommendation of the minister, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may by order cancel any of the following..." I won't read them all, because I've only got 48 seconds, but number 2 is, "A forest resource licence."

Then it sets out the conditions, and there's some nice conditions that supposedly would protect forest operators, except (c) says, "The order is necessary or desirable for such other reasons, whether or not the reasons are related to the reasons set out in clause (a) or (b), as are prescribed by the regulations." That essentially gives the minister the ability to go up to Tembec or whoever it might be and say, "I don't like you. You've been oppositional to this government. I don't like you because now I've got a new friend," and actually cancel their licence. Why in God's name would we ever do that in the legislation? This is going to throw the financing for expansion and for the building of new mills in northern Ontario to the degree that we've never seen before.

I will speak to this fully when I get a chance later, but this is really dangerous stuff.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. David Ramsay:** I'm very pleased to be able to comment on this, and thank the minister for having the courage, quite frankly, to address the challenges that the forest industry has and the economy of northern Ontario has. What the minister is doing is basically bringing forward into the modern day a system that's quite archaic, a system that was designed to service what the lumber, or the forest, industry was, which was basically paper and lumber.

Over the last 40 years, new products have evolved that have demanded other wood species, and many of those companies have had difficulty in getting the hardwoods that they want and other subspecies. Now we're on the

cusp of a revolution in forestry, in that it's going to move from a materials-based industry to a chemical-based industry that will produce energy and medicines and other composite materials. So the minister and the government of the day need to have the flexibility in order to address those challenges.

The prime responsibility of this, though, is that as a government we want to make sure that our natural resources, which are owned by the people of Ontario, are put to the best use for the people of Ontario. As a northerner, that's very important for ridings such as mine, where forestry plays a large part in our economy. We have to make sure that all our people have the best advantage they can from the resources that we're blessed with, to be able to utilize those and keep employed and have the ability to raise their families.

This legislation is going to do that, in working with our companies today and the companies of the future. It's very important that we have this policy in place so that we can have a future industry in Ontario.

1400

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased that our party has recognized how important this is. The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington will be leading off, with the member from Haldimand-Norfolk. But the member from Oshawa, as a former minister—and I think Mr. Bisson made reference to that. We have a lot of concerns about the dismantling of what's going on, and, as persons who live in the south, we realize how important this is to the north. That we get it right is important. So I'm going to look at some articles I've looked up. A joint statement by the Timmins Economic Development Corp., the Corporation of the City of Timmins and the Timmins Chamber of Commerce—and here's what they said. Their response was:

"We commend the ministry for attempting to address these issues and improve Ontario's forest sector. Unfortunately, while well intended, the government-led tenure review has not been able to keep pace with the business world. In recent years, a handful of industry-driven models have been developed by multiple players in the forest sector, some of which represent unprecedented collaboration between forestry companies. This, in conjunction with the province's competitive wood supply process, are two key components of the solution industry supports. Our three entities recommend"—and they go on. This afternoon, I'm sure they'll be covered.

This one-size solution may be the wrong solution. The minister needs controls; we understand that. But more importantly, the industry needs control as well. I'm anxious to listen to the discussion because I've heard for the last two years here how you have devastated the forest industry with the price of energy. I know that that's not part of this bill, but this needs to have a sensitive response, not just a political response. That's what worries me most: that you'll end up with fewer but larger entities in the industry.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry has up to two minutes to respond.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I appreciate the comments from everyone. Let me begin with my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane. I'm very grateful for his comments. Obviously, as a prior Minister of Natural Resources, he understands this issue very, very well. In fact, the northern members of my caucus were extremely supportive about us needing to move on this particular measure in order for us to find ways to ensure that Ontario's wood is indeed being put to work. That is the goal.

It's interesting, if I may comment on the member from Oshawa, a former minister: I'm not sure you listened, or perhaps my remarks didn't make it clear. Certainly we understand how important the primary forest industry is; that's why we work so closely with them. But one of our key goals of this is to see that smaller entrants have access to fibre; to see that indeed the wood that is not being used is basically put to work. You said to me that you were concerned about some of the smaller companies not getting access. I do want to assure you that the goal of this is to take a measured approach but to make sure that indeed our wood is put to work and that some of the smaller operators that had difficulty getting access will be able to get access.

To my colleague from Timmins-James Bay: The part of the legislation which relates to the ability of the minister to potentially, under certain circumstances, cancel a licence is based very much on our determination to see that our wood is harvested, that there is no hoarding of wood. We saw a great deal of that in the past. It's not a question of having a dispute with a company; it's a question of making sure our wood is actually being used. I wanted to make that clear.

The member for Durham: What you were really describing was our model of enhanced shareholder SFLs. The co-operation you spoke about with the companies was indeed the kind of discussions we had with the primary industry. The enhanced shareholder model, a larger group of companies working together, is indeed one of our goals in the legislation.

I look forward to further debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll be sharing my leadoff with the member for Haldimand-Norfolk, Mr. Barrett.

I'm going to start off this debate on Bill 151. I'm not going to attack it because it's in a partisan fashion. I'm not going to attack it because it has been advanced by a Liberal and I'm a Conservative. But I am going to challenge the minister and challenge all members of the government side to actually read this bill and to understand the devastation that it will cause.

I have a lot of respect for the minister. I think he has a lot of good intentions. But this bill certainly can't be—it must be conflicting to the minister to present a bill that is so empty of substance, so empty of tangible effects other

than a complete assumption of authority and power by the minister without any criteria, without defining any safeguards on ministerial authority. I really do wish for all Liberal members to look at it and think and reflect: If this bill was advanced by another party, if this bill was advanced by the Conservatives, would you support it? In your hearts, would you support this piece of legislation if it was advanced by my party or by the third party? Be honest with yourselves: Would you grant that level of authority, without checks and balances, to any government? I think that when you actually reflect on what's in this bill, you will be surprised that you're advancing it and that you're being asked to support this.

This bill does give overwhelming powers to the minister, with absolutely no control. It is terrible legislation in that it gives the minister the power to do anything he wants in the forestry sector by regulation, without any oversight by this Legislature or even by the courts. Even the courts can't look at the minister's actions. The Liberals have not thought this one through, or you are just being indifferent to the challenges in the forestry sector.

I want to just follow up on what the member from Timmins—James Bay said. “On the recommendation of the minister”—this is subsection 41.1(1)—“the Lieutenant Governor in Council may by order cancel any of the following:

“(1) An agreement to supply forest resources....

“(2) A forest resource licence.

“(3) Any agreement” about forestry.

If you look at legislation, we always put some constraints on the minister when he has the authority to harm somebody's business interests; when he has the authority to harm somebody's personal interests. We always define the safeguards that constrain that authority so it will not be used in an arbitrary fashion. Not in this case. There are no preconditions attached to the minister's authority, and I would like the minister to explain that to the House, if he gets an opportunity. Why is it that in this case, you have removed all the safeguards? You have only put in that you have the authority, but not how you will apply it.

Minister, in your leadoff speech you said that you would never exercise that authority. I question: If you would never exercise that authority, then why are you granting it to yourself?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I didn't say that.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** That is the message that you—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** He didn't say it, Randy.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** We understand that there is a problem with our wood supply, but you cannot take that absolute power and expect people to be accepting of it. Minister, I can say this: You would not grant me that authority. You would not grant anybody else that authority and nobody on your backbench would grant anybody that authority, but you're saying it's okay for Minister Gravelle to have that authority. I'm going to say it to you all, and you all know this: Minister Gravelle may not be there on October 7. Maybe Minister Gravelle might not be there next week; I'm not sure. Things do change in the

Liberal cabinet. Why are you granting this level of authority?

**1410**

I think maybe I'll just read from the royal commission that was done in this province by the Hon. James McRuer; the inquiry into civil rights. “Although it is recognized that it is necessary for effective modern government to confer the power to legislate in proper cases, there should be constant vigilance to retain adequate control by the representative Legislature and practical and effective safeguards against abuse of the subordinate power. Where the Legislature unnecessarily gives up control and fails to provide proper safeguards for the rights of the individual there is the possibility of an ‘unjustified encroachment’ on those rights.”

That comes out of the Royal Commission Inquiry into Civil Rights in this province by the Chief Justice at the time, James McRuer. It's one that has been a hallmark of legislative process. It has been a keystone that our legislation regards and respects the safeguards of the Legislature against authority.

This minister and this government say, “We don't have to respect the royal commissions; we don't have to respect thoughtful, honourable jurists; we don't have to respect due process and the rule of law. We're just going to go ahead.” That is a disturbing set of circumstances and steps by this government.

As the minister said, he's going to test out the principles with this piece of legislation. We know what happens when you give absolute authority. It's been a long-tested principle. We all know the potential, the probabilities and the outcomes.

But I think it's important for us all to recognize that when a piece of legislation gets advanced in this House, it should be thought about already, it should be thought through already. We should be having something of substance in this bill. Other than granting authority to the minister, what else does it do? We're not quite sure, other than the fact that it gives the minister authority to create LFMCS, local forestry management companies. It gives him the authority to add to that bundle of ABCs—the over 600 agencies, boards and commissions—that we have in this province already. He can create some more, and everything is going to be determined by regulation. Everything about those LFMCSs is going to be determined afterward. None of us here is going to have the opportunity to provide thoughtful and reflective commentary on how they get constructed.

The only thing we know is that these LFMCSs, created at the behest of the minister, will have an appointed board of directors—we know that—and we know that they'll go through the same political patronage process that is used for all the other agencies, boards and commissions. That's what we know. We have another layer of political patronage being created and another layer of bureaucracy being created, but that's all we know. We know that the minister's intent is good. He wants these unelected, unaccountable agencies, boards and commissions, these LFMCSs, to respond to the market, to

respond to the needs of forestry. But I ask you—we have hundreds of these agencies already—how effective have they been? Why are you creating more of them, and why are you creating them without any other defined interests and criteria in the legislation?

To me, it is unacceptable that we would have this emptiness of legislation other than authority and patronage. That's what we have. The north deserves far more than that. The north and our forestry deserve much more than that. They have been stifled. The forest industry in this province has undertaken difficult times, and when you speak to them, many of the people in the forestry industry are gripped with fear: the fear of uncertainty, the fear of doubt, the fear of many things.

But one thing is now adding to that fear: Now the minister can revoke their licence—whoever's licence for whatever reason—and he's unaccountable. The forestry company wouldn't even be able to apply for a judicial review of the minister's decision—completely out of the equation. Can you imagine what it does to the forestry companies to have their lifeline to the forest, their lifeline to their needed commodity, their lifeline to their wood being in the hands of someone whose decisions are unaccountable to anyone?

The creation of LFMCS has to give people cause to think: Is this not very much the same as what the Liberal government has done with the LHINs? Are the LFMCS the new LHINs for the forestry industry, a place where decisions can be made and the minister cannot be held responsible for the actions of his ministry or his portfolio? Is that what's happening with the creation of these LFMCS, and this experiment is just that, an experiment? It's as if the north and our forestry industry are nothing more than a legislative guinea pig for this Liberal government: We're going to test things out at your expense; we're going to leave you in fear of what may happen to your resources.

Minister, I know this is not what you had in mind a couple of years ago when you started out on these tenure reform discussions. I was at a number of them, like you. We heard many people, and we heard that in forestry they need certainty. We heard time and time again that forestry needs certainty so that they can get back to work. Minister, you say you want to get the wood to work. Well, I know that the wood can't work if people aren't there to do the work. People need certainty.

This bill does everything but create certainty. It creates doubt and fear, and creates this thickening layer of decision-making and a thickening obstacle between the forestry industry and the minister of the crown who is responsible for our crown forests. We've got another layer of administrative bureaucracy creeping into the forestry industry, creeping into this Legislative Assembly, that restricts, prevents, obstructs our forestry industry from talking to the decision-makers. That's what it's really doing. It's eliminating that path between our forestry industry and the minister who is responsible for that portfolio.

We all recognize that in an effective legislative democracy, we need to take down those barriers. We need to

reduce that thick layer that prevents people from an industry from talking to our ministers. We need to make it transparent; we need to make it accountable. Creating forestry LHINs is not the way to achieve that. It is actually completely opposed to it.

1420

William Gladstone, the Prime Minister of the UK back in the 19th century, said, "It is the duty of government to make it difficult for people to do wrong, easy to do right." This government has tabled Bill 151, which makes it difficult to do right and easy to do wrong. It's the opposite of that Gladstone principle. It's the opposite of what Gladstone called a dutiful government. This government has skipped out on its duty when it comes to the tenure renewal process.

The minister said that he would modernize this industry's relationship with government. The industry waited and waited while the minister tied up the wood allocation under his review, and now we have this uncertainty. Also, these consultations that we went into—it was so evident that creating these forestry LHINs was opposed by everyone.

I said at the time that I thought these consultations were false and predetermined. Sure enough, they were predetermined and they were false, because the minister has proceeded with this experiment of creating the forestry industry into a Liberal guinea pig, and just what it is that they think they're going to achieve, I'm not sure.

In addition to those discussions, it was also heard that for the forestry to work, for the forestry to get back engaged—and not only just get back to where they were, but to actually be prosperous and to thrive—they needed some changes. The costs of doing business and the regulations of doing business were far too great. They were at a complete disadvantage. Many other jurisdictions are far, far more competitive than we are.

I'll just give you an example. Just one forest management licence to cut wood, for one firm, has 14 binders of paperwork detailing what he is allowed to do and what he's not allowed to do—14 binders to cut a tree in this province. Everybody will recognize that that is just not acceptable. Fourteen binders of regulation and legislation; up to a million dollars in costs. What does this forest modernization do for that? Absolutely nothing.

Certainty of resources was talked about—not included. Regulatory burden was talked about—not included, other than the fact that now we'll have these LFMCS that can add to the regulatory burden and the minister will not be responsible for it. He'll be able to brush it off and say, "Well, it wasn't my decision. It was the LPMC." "The LPMC had to add a new caribou conservation plan" maybe. Or, "The LPMC had to do something because of the Blanding's turtle." But it won't be the minister's fault; it will be the LPMC's.

What are we doing to help out on the regulatory burden, Minister, with this bill? I would like you to respond some time. What does this bill do to lessen the onerous and excessive regulatory burden that our forestry companies have to deal with? I say it does nothing. It is

mute, it is silent, on regulations, silent on how to improve the competitiveness of our forest industry.

Let's put this in perspective for the people here who may not be aware. We know that we have, according to the minister, 26 million cubic metres of fibre that can be harvested in a sustainable fashion out of Ontario's north every year. Last year, we harvested somewhere between 10 million and 11 million cubic metres. That's not very productive. But it also demonstrates, because of our uncompetitive nature, why we are performing at such a low level.

I also want to add this: When we compare our productivity rates from our crown forests to other jurisdictions, it is incredible. Here in Ontario, we harvest about half a cubic metre of fibre per year per acre of land. That's what we do: about half a cubic metre. In the Scandinavian countries, their harvests are typically six cubic metres per acre per year, a tenfold-higher productivity level. Do we have a problem? Yes, Minister, we have a problem—yes, Speaker, we have a problem—when we can get only half a cubic metre out of the bush in an acre of land but the Scandinavian countries are taking six cubic metres out of an acre per year.

Who's going to be profitable? Who's going to attract investment? Where are the jobs? You can get a job here if you know how to write one of the regulations for those 14 binders for the minister. But other than that—

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** You can be a facilitator or something.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** We have regulations. We have security of tenure and security of resource. Then, of course, what else has been the keystone for economic development and investment and attractiveness in forestry and specifically in northern Ontario? Of course, the cost of energy.

Those three things are required for a competitive forestry industry, an industry that will not just get back on its feet but will be able to run someday. But those three keystones are completely absent in this legislation. There's not a word about them, other than the fact that the minister is going to have more power and will not be constrained or restrained in any fashion at all.

I think it's also important that we have in here—maybe I should give a copy of this royal commission report to the minister so he can have a chance to read sometime about the separation of power. Here he is, creating this LFMC that will have all the authority, other than the minister's authority to revoke and cancel licences. There's a need to have some separation of powers that is defined and understood, and to have ways and means to provide remedies. There are no remedies attached to this bill, no remedies whatsoever.

How these LFMCs are going to operate is anybody's guess. Nobody here has any idea how they're going to operate, and that's the honest-to-goodness truth. Right, Minister? Nobody knows.

It really comes back to this: How can the members of this Liberal government, in all honesty, approve and endorse and vote for something that is completely absent, completely void of any detail other than authority?

1430

I guarantee that everybody on that side would be hollering with righteous indignation if the Conservative Party brought in a bill such as this, right? Each and every one of you would be outraged and furious, but it's okay if you do it.

I would be outraged if anybody introduced this bill, Minister, because it is completely disrespectful of this Legislature. I know that's not what you intended to do, but that's what it does. Everything is going to be created by regulation. None of us here are going to have any influence or input on those regulations.

We know what the standard is on the introduction of regulations. There are a certain number of legal requirements that the regulations have to meet. They have to be stated in clear and unambiguous language. They ought not to impose fines and penalties. They're listed in the standing orders, what those regulations are. But it's a very minimal—it's just a legal threshold. But that's all we're going to do. We know that the clerks and the people on that committee will say, "Yeah, these regulations meet those legal thresholds"—don't have a clue what they're going to actually mean in practice, but they're going to be adopted anyway.

Minister, I know you could do better. I know the forestry industry wants you to do better. I know the forestry industry expects you to do better. We all expect you to do better, and we know that you can. I don't believe bringing this bill in—and we saw what happened with the last bill that was introduced in this House last week; it went right to time allocation. This bill needs—I don't believe that we can seriously offer up any amendments to it, because how do you amend something that is empty? I could offer up an amendment that the minister ought not to have that much authority. He should go back to a process as defined by that royal commission, but he already has that. He has that in the existing legislation.

What is the intent here, Minister? I know you couldn't have really wanted to create that much fear and doubt in forestry, but that's what is going to happen when you put yourself in that position.

We continue to lose out on our forestry business, and what are we gaining for it in its place? Well, we are going to gain some new patronage positions; that's without a doubt. We're going to have—and we're not sure because, at the end of this act, it says the minister has the authority to create "one or more" LFMCs—one or more forestry LHINs. We could have one big forestry LHIN, or we could have—

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Fourteen.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** —fourteen. I'm not sure.

I thought we already had an administrator for forestry in this province, and that administrator is called the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. That's who has the obligations, who has the authority. Why are we creating another layer of bureaucracy? Are 14 binders not enough? Do we need to have 20 binders of regulations to get a stick of wood out of the bush? How many binders are you going to want? How many are you

going to demand? Are you going to keep demanding until there is no forestry industry left in this province? That's what it appears to be going to.

You've done nothing for hydro costs, nothing for security of tenure, nothing about regulations. What principles are you testing, or is this just an experiment of creating bureaucratic empires that you know work so well? They work so well with your LHINs; they work so well with so many other examples.

Minister, let's get back to work. Forget putting the wood to work right now. Let's get you back to work. Let's get your ministry back to work. Let's get back to work in this Legislature. Do not take away the authority from the Legislature, and respect the demands, the requests and the expectations of northern Ontario. Throw this piece of junk in the garbage can where it belongs, and let's do things right. I know I'll continue to respect you if you do that tomorrow.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I appreciate the opportunity to add a little bit to the comments of our critic.

As we know, in 2009 the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry initiated a forest tenure review. The goal: to modernize industry's relationship with government, or vice versa. As we know, at that time the initial response from industry was positive. There was a belief that the Ontarian government would work with them in good faith to develop a framework, something with less red tape. However, there was a decrease in wood allocation during this consultation period. Complaints started to surface very shortly after that. The industry had a suspicion that the consultations were predetermined. I saw a memo that seemed to suggest that things were kind of laid out in a plan and were going to move forward regardless of what kind of feedback or input arrived from the companies involved. There was a concern, they claim, that the ministry was attempting to create an arm's-length crown forest management agency or agencies that would separate the minister, the elected representative, from the burden of dealing with the various companies, large and small.

As we know, Bill 151 permits the incorporation by regulation of one or more of these local forest management corporations, the LFMCs. Our critic has identified them as the forestry LHINs, tree LHINs—that comes to my mind; refer to them as tree LHINs. I don't know whether Sarnia-Lambton is going to get a tree LHIN. I know you have a health LHIN.

I want to add that our critic, Randy Hillier, the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, has been doing a very good job, in my view, travelling the north—I've run into him up there—and speaking up for the north. He seems to show up at every dogfight up there, or every wolverine fight, or any other fights that are going on—you can find Randy Hillier present. That has been our experience in the past, in the south and in the east.

As we know, in January of this year the ministry halted consultations. They unilaterally announced that

they were ending this tenure review. As a result, today we commenced debate on Bill 151, the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, a piece of legislation that also amends the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.

**1440**

I had an opportunity this winter, as with every winter for at least the last seven years, to travel with the finance committee. We always fight to get up north, and it's worth it. It's worth it even for the sole reason of the kind of presentations that we get from the forest industry, an industry that's been in a tremendous amount of trouble for the last several years.

One of the presenters—I think it was in Timmins—was Brian Nicks of the Eacom Timber Corp., the director of forestry for Ontario. Mr. Nicks is also the chair of the Ontario Forest Industries Association, OFIA. He attended in Timmins, along with Jamie Lim, the CEO of the OFIA. In fact, the two of them were also in Toronto just last week. Mr. Bailey and I attended that meeting just a block or two from here.

These people do a very good job in representing their industry, an industry that, in my view—especially given the last several years—needs all the help that it needs. It wasn't that long ago that Eacom Timber Corp., the company that Mr. Nicks represents, acquired the forest products division of Domtar. They have six Ontario wood mills. Five of them are in full operation; that's a good thing. They were originally based in British Columbia. They decided to invest in Ontario for a number of reasons. They have a very optimistic view of the potential for a strong and sustained recovery of Ontario's softwood lumber industry relative to western Canada.

Why is that? The BC interior has seen a rapid decline in the volume and the quality of pine that's available because of the mountain pine beetle epidemic. This company, Eacom, sees the emergence of wood—I should say the re-emergence; all of my buildings on our farms are made of wood—as an environmentally friendly and structurally sound building material in North America, Europe and the Middle East.

I might mention that it is very important in Ontario to take a serious look at the six-story building model for wood construction. Concrete, steel—it's very energy-intensive to use products like that.

Also, there's a rapidly growing demand from China. The lumber they want is BC lumber. That diverts increasing amounts of western lumber away from the traditional Ontario markets in the United States.

In his deputation, Mr. Nicks noted another positive development, and this occurred just a few days before he spoke—this is last January—at the London Court of International Arbitration. The decision was with respect to the infamous softwood lumber deal, the US-alleged subsidization of Ontario's softwood lumber by the Ontario government. Rather than the 20% additional export tax originally sought by the US, the LCIA panel will require only a 0.1% additional export tax on Ontario softwood lumber shipped to the US. It's not there yet, but that's something we can optimistically look forward to.

It's going to take time. Ontario's lumber industry recovery is going to take time. As I mentioned, it's an industry that was decimated by the collapse of the housing market in the United States, the 2008 recession, the 15% export tax under the softwood lumber agreement, the high dollar and the high debt of the companies themselves. Exports to the US are currently running at only 20% of the levels of 2006. US housing starts are at less than 30% of where they were in 2006: back then, there were 2.4 million housing starts a year in the United States. The price of a two-by-four today is about half of what it was in 1994. That's fine for consumers like us, building a house, a shed, a barn or a shop; that's fine for us to be able to now pick up two-by-fours at half the price.

The other thing—and we heard this over and over again during finance committee hearings—is the high price of electricity, the industrial price in the north; the price of energy, other forms of energy, fuel costs and insurance costs.

What can the Ontario government do to help out, beyond get this tenure proposal in order, as recommended by our critic? Other things:

- the construction and the maintenance of access roads in the province of Ontario, which help ameliorate the average cost of a log. In this industry, the price of the wood itself is obviously the major expense;

- extend industrial electricity rates and programs that are now enjoyed by the larger companies to the smaller mills that are operating. Again, we were assured by the minister, if I myself heard correctly today, that this new tenure model will benefit smaller firms. That's a concern that I have. Again, we'll see how that one works out;

- third, and we've been hearing this for a number of years, provide long-term, permanent access to a predictable and affordable supply of timber on crown land.

As far as supply, Mr. Nicks had two suggestions as far as access to fibre: first, the timely completion of the wood supply competitive process, aimed at reallocating up to seven million cubic metres a year of merchantable fibre—fibre that is, by and large, not being used; secondly, asking the minister to keep that 2007 commitment to recognize the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and provide for the needs of species at risk with respect, again, to crown land and the forests contained thereon. As was indicated during the hearings, an exemption from the Endangered Species Act is both legally possible and justifiable in a practical sense. Lastly—and here is the issue we're debating today—follow through on the modified forest tenure reforms that were announced on January 13 this year; on January 13, that announcement was made.

During finance committee, we also heard from Tammy Mazzetti of Georgia-Pacific, Englehart. Mazzetti stated that the tenure reform model, as initially proposed by the government, where the mills were disconnected from the supply, creates uncertainty and creates risk. As we know, uncertainty is the most dangerous threat to any business, really, obviously including the forest business.

The system where crown corporations—the local forest management corporations, the forest LHINs, the tree LHINs, whatever handle they're going to end up wearing—essentially manage the land base will most likely reduce the security of supply and increase the cost of delivered wood. This experiment, this pilot project, it was felt, would create a great risk—certainly a spectre of a risk—during what continue to be very fragile economic times.

We've heard about the Coalition for Putting Ontario's Wood Back to Work. We were hearing that expression a lot today, "Wood back to work." Two hundred forest companies had some proposals with respect to tenure reform, some alternative ideas. They suggested finishing the wood supply competition, finishing up that process and transforming the existing SFLs, the sustainable forest licences, to co-operative licences, which by their very nature would be more inclusive, would lay things out for companies both large and small and include all stakeholders.

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This dual initiative would allow innovative entrepreneurs access to unused fibre and give them the opportunity to expand and diversify into other markets, alternative markets. It, again, would address the issues at hand while not negatively impacting the existing mills that have worked very, very hard—the ones that have survived over the last number of years, the very tough years in the north—to maintain their operations.

Now, this January announcement regarding an approach to tenure and pricing reform, as I understand, according to Tammy Mazzetti was felt to be positive for the forest industry. Again, what's key? A competitively priced, secure, reliable fibre supply. This is the cornerstone of this particular business.

I'm not in the business in northern Ontario, but we own a number of woodlots. Hardwood—we're more into red oak. When the markets are right, yes, there is a very significant income there. Some of our woodlots—the last time we logged off one of our big ones, it hadn't been logged since the 1930s. That's how we do business in the south: You plant trees. I cut trees—I own a chainsaw—but you give the trees an opportunity to grow and restore themselves.

Our critic, Randy Hillier, attended these hearings in northern Ontario just last January, and he indicated—I think this was during questions to one of the presenters. The local forestry management corporations "and the forest tenure program ... was a year-and-a-half process where we didn't get any new fibre into the system. It sounds very much like the minister has stepped down from that proposed model, and Georgia-Pacific is happy with the stepping down." But as Mr. Hillier said, we need some certainty in the system as to what is going to be made available and how it's going to be made available.

Jamie Lim, as she does every year, testified at the witness table. Jamie is the CEO of the OFIA. As she stated, the "January 13th announcement on tenure reform was a positive development. OFIA requests the govern-

ment to complete its provincial wood supply competition”—that was the recommendation—“and accelerate the movement towards” this enhanced co-op proposal.

“OFIA requests that the government permanently protect a minimum of 26 million cubic meters,” and as I recall, in her brief, the bottom of every page talked about 26 million cubic meters of sustainable industrial fibre.

As she said, “The continued erosion of Ontario’s fibre basket threatens our northern and rural future. Also”—there was another request; again, to me this was a no-brainer—“conduct socio-economic impact assessments on all legislation, regulations and policies that could reduce the provincial fibre supply.” In order to maintain existing investments and to stimulate growth, the provincial government needs to ensure that wood supply is there.

I’ll quote the minister, actually, in his announcement back on November 26, 2009. Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, stated, “Ontario’s crown forest can sustainably produce 26 million cubic meters of wood annually.” That’s from the minister. He’s saying exactly the same thing as the CEO of the Ontario Forest Industries Association.

Government does need to recognize that business runs on certainty and, as such, the individual facilities—the processors, the mills—need secure, affordable, long-term wood, permanently protected. They need that kind of certainty. They need commitments on supply. The removal of existing wood supply commitments, as proposed under another document titled A Proposed Framework to Modernize Ontario’s Forest Tenure and Pricing System, would jeopardize the mills that have survived, the ones that did make it through the last tough years. To use an expression, we’re not out of the woods yet on that one as far as the economy. The proposed government experiment, this pilot project on tenure, will create a disincentive for future investment and a disincentive for new people to come into the business.

Here’s a quote from Tom Laughren, mayor of Timmins: “From a city perspective, we know we need jobs, and we know the importance of the forest industry. We’ve got all of these initiatives in place right now that are starting to work, so why would we want to scrap those now and replace them with a completely new tenure system?” That was a statement last summer.

The government’s proposal, its large-scale, untested experiment, will significantly jeopardize the economic viability of the sector. There was opposition from a range of stakeholders to the original plans, and that’s why it’s so important that this be adjusted.

In July of last summer, about 200 forest companies, service providers, signed an open letter. This is, as I was referring to earlier, the Coalition for Putting Ontario’s Wood Back to Work. They registered their concerns and wanted to send forward a message that the proposal at the time was unnecessary, that it really went too far. In July, a media release went out from the Ontario Forest Industries Association. The title of the news release was, “Government Experimenting with 60,000 Forestry Jobs.”

There was a joint statement from Timmins, from the city, the economic development department, the chamber of commerce, requesting that the government defer any further action on the modernization of Ontario’s forest tenure and pricing for at least three years.

I think I heard the minister state that he will take his time on regulation. I can be corrected if I was wrong on that one. It’s so important to get this right.

Wanting to go forward with the existing process as far as wood supply and the movement to co-operative SFLs, sustainable forest licences: “Get that done first.” That was the advice.

Littlejohn Enterprises, their quote in this news release: “We’re finally doing something right and all of a sudden they turn around and kick us in the teeth. Costs will go through the roof.”

Bancroft Minden Forest Company: “The current tenure arrangements for these licences are not broken and do not need to be fixed.” That was the opinion last summer. This media release goes on to say, “One of the key concerns with the MNDMF proposed model is that it will arbitrarily remove any existing fibre supply commitments or agreements held by forest companies—commitments that have given companies the security and certainty”—again, the certainty—“needed to invest in their mills. Instead, the government is proposing to hand over decision-making authority to crown corporations or agencies run by well-intended individuals who are appointed by government, but have no experience or understanding of the forest sector and no vested interest.”

1500

Here’s a quote from Harold Wilson. I think many know Harold. I always run into him at airports in the north—

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I know Harold well.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes, we all know Harold. He’s got a new job now.

“The bottom line is that if you cannot get a guaranteed fibre supply, long term, from the government, how can you get financing?” Harold is now president of the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce.

I will say that, having been on this committee for seven years, I really look forward to the briefings from the Ontario Forest Industries Association. They put together a very good package, they make it relevant for southern Ontario, they always explain to people like myself from the rural south, remind us—something I don’t need reminding of—how important the forest industry is; primary industry, whether it’s forestry, mining, steel, agriculture—how important these industries are, something we don’t see a lot of in the city of Toronto, for example. We’re going to see a little bit of the financial side of things with the prospectors’ convention that’s being held in the city today and over the next several days. It’s so important for us to be reminded of how important the forest industry is.

I’ll just wrap up with the latest figures from Jamie Lim. This relates just to the companies that are still left standing, the survivors. These are going to be the winners

once primarily the US housing market and the US economy take off again. Ontario's forest sector still supports 200,000 direct and indirect jobs in 260 Ontario communities, including southern Ontario. We make a lot of the equipment in the south. Wages and salaries are sitting at, at the present time, \$2.7 billion a year. It's an industry that accounts for \$14 billion in sales, billions more in ancillary economic activity, \$4 billion in exports and—something the government members are always interested in—\$2.3 billion in taxes, not only provincial taxes, but federal and municipal taxes.

But there are problems. I've highlighted some of the continued threats today. The concern, again, is the need for certainty and the need for the development and the implementation of appropriate policy. What they are seeing, and this is what the industry told us during the hearings, is damaging provincial policy, policy that increased costs—for example, the wood turtle habitat regulation; policy, or lack of policy, or lack of investment in roads on crown land, which indirectly increases the cost of a log; policy that reduces the forest land base; restrictions on Algonquin park—it's referred to as lightening the footprint in Algonquin park. The Endangered Species Act obviously reduces forest land that would be available.

Their big concern—again, I'm repeating myself—is the government policy that creates uncertainty, and in that box they include tenure reform.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened carefully to the two spokespersons for the Conservative caucus on this issue. While I might disagree with them on a number of points with respect to forest policy generally and with respect to issues like tenure specifically, I do have to admit that they have highlighted one of the areas that is of major concern.

As we know, Ontario used to have a formidable forest industry, a formidable pulp and paper industry and a formidable sawmill industry. Regrettably, that is not so today. Mills are struggling to survive. They're struggling to get even a modest amount of new investment.

The issue of security of tenure is very, very important. If you are an operating mill and you're trying to get \$25 million or \$50 million, perhaps to add new technology, perhaps to modernize your operation, perhaps just to keep up to pace with environmental requirements, you have to go to the bank to get that money. But the bank will not provide you with that money unless they know you have security of tenure on your wood supply.

What does this bill do? It gives the minister the unfettered authority to simply walk in and cancel a company's wood supply. There are no restrictions; there are no criteria. Basically, the section says that the minister, for whatever reason—he may be having a bad day; he may be in a bad mood—can simply walk in and cancel a company's rights to timber.

Nothing could be more damaging to the industry and its attempts to recover in Ontario, and I think the minister had better explain why that section is in the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I'm grateful for the comments from the members from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington and Haldimand–Norfolk.

There's a lot that I could say. Certainly, it's interesting to hear the concerns expressed by the critic, who is, on the one hand, concerned about the measures that we'll put in place to allow the minister to potentially make a decision to cancel a licence at some point.

It's important to make it very clear that, indeed, the goal of this legislation is to see that our wood is actually harvested. We don't want to see hoarding. That is the reason why there is a measure in place to give the minister that authority: to make sure that those who have the wood tenure are not sitting on their wood.

Having said that, there's no question I did say it's something that I would not do casually, or the minister would not do casually. It's very important to note that it's based on wanting to be sure that a tenure is used.

On the other hand, the critic said we've got no authority over the local forest management corporations. It was like you were back and forth, in terms of the two angles, on the one hand saying there would be too much authority for the minister, and on the other hand saying there would be no authority whatsoever for the other agencies. That's really what you said.

I want to speak to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk as well. You spoke about some of the concerns expressed by industry, as did the member for Kenora–Rainy River. That's why we consulted so extensively. That's why we've been at this for about a year and a half. That's why, after our final draft proposal was put in place, we've had discussions with industry. In many ways, they are the architects of the enhanced shareholder SFL model, based on the work they've done in terms of co-op models.

It's really important to understand that while we're trying to make this work for primary industry, to give them that security, we also want to make sure that we broaden the spectrum to allow smaller entrants in. That's where the enhanced shareholder SFL will be a model that we think will work, and so do they.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm certainly impressed with my colleagues on this side of the House standing up for northern Ontario. In fact, I would say that the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington as well as the member from Haldimand–Norfolk spoke eloquently. I'm waiting for the member from Oshawa to speak, as I said earlier.

On this side, clearly, we have the best interests of northern Ontario at heart. That's really what I hear. That's what I heard in caucus from our leader, Tim Hudak. We believe that we have to recapture northern Ontario as a producer of wealth for our province. It's ultimately the resources, of which timber is part.

My role here today, basically, is to listen and learn. I would say, when I looked at the briefing notes that I

developed myself, that there's a long history here, starting with the Crown Timber Act in 1849, and the sustainability portion of it has gone through a number of iterations.

Now we've got a new group of bureaucrats, if you will. These are what they call the local forest management corporations. These were referred to by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk as “the new LHINs.” These are the government agencies—bureaucrats, often—manipulating at arm's length, so to speak, the outcomes for northern Ontario.

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Our fear remains. You need to have competition in a market, but it has to be fair. There are examples across northern Ontario where individual firms have worked together to have plans that worked for them. We're coming up now with a replacement of that, which is simply replacing these good stewardship practices. The companies themselves realize that this is a finite resource and needs to be managed. What you don't need is some appointed—often politically appointed—LFMC operator who is not looking at the best interests of northern Ontario.

We're going to hold the minister to account on this and see how the market changes, because you've pretty well ruined it up to this date with high electricity prices.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'll have a chance in a few minutes to give the lead from our party's perspective in regard to this particular legislation, but I just want to say that this whole argument that we need to make the change because we don't have the authority in the current act to allocate unutilized timber is not the case. The minister has always had the authority under the sustainable forest redevelopment act, if a mill is not using fibre that could be used by somebody else, to redirect that wood. To argue otherwise is just not right; it's not what's in the law. I know the law, because Howard Hampton was the guy who drafted it and I was the guy who was on the committee that carried it. So I know very well what was in that bill, and I've been working with it for some time.

The difficulty has been that this current government, starting with the previous Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Ramsay, and others who came after, decided they wouldn't exercise their authority under the act. They took a chance that if they allowed the companies to hold on to the wood, eventually there would be a downward cycle in the marketplace and the larger companies would be able to keep the wood in order to start supermills. In the end, they've not been able to do that because the cycle has been longer. That's what has happened here. To say this bill is needed because we have to give the Minister of Natural Resources or the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry the authority to reallocate timber is just not the case.

The other thing—and I'll speak to this after—is that we're completely turning on its head the system by which we charge stumpage in this bill and moving to basically a

market-driven system, which I think is foreign to Ontario, because these are public forests, not private land. For us to follow the Americans, I think, is wrong-headed because it doesn't suit the reality of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I want to thank the members from Haldimand–Norfolk, Durham, Timmins–James Bay and Kenora–Rainy River, and the minister as well.

In response, I will say this: This government is in chaos. This Liberal government is in chaos. Just last week they announced the Northern Policy Institute as their growth plan for the north, but is that not just hypocrisy in its best example? Here they have brought out all the policies in the form of legislation. They've brought out this act, they've brought out the Far North Act, the caribou conservation plan, the Mining Act and high energy costs—they've brought in all the policies that have devastated and killed northern Ontario—and now they're going to have a policy institute and a think tank after all the policies have been done.

The north deserves more than just more Liberal patronage, and that's all we're going to get in this, other than the new forestry czar in the form of the minister. I know there are some jurisdictions that like to have czars; I don't think we should have a czar in a democracy, but that's what the minister has. He has complete, unfettered authority to do whatever he likes and to destroy anybody's commitments and licences. That's what he gets.

Economic stimulus in the north is not more Liberal patronage, and that's the only thing we get in this bill: more Liberal patronage with that thickening layer of red tape and obstruction with the forestry LHINs.

I look forward to the minister doing as asked earlier: Throw this piece of junk in the garbage where it belongs, start over again and do a better job.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I look forward to participating in this debate for a number of reasons. I know that many people are paying attention to this in northern Ontario because, quite frankly, it is going to have a fairly direct effect on many communities across the north.

I want to start off by saying I disagree with the premise that this bill is needed in order to find a way to deal with unallocated timber. Could the un-allocation process be made better? Obviously. Everything can be made better. My mother's apple pie could be made better, although that is hard to believe. My point is, to make an argument that you need this bill to be able to allocate unutilized timber—nothing could be further from the truth.

Currently under the act, the process is this: If I am a forest company, and I have a mill in northern Ontario—and I'll just pick one as an example, Tembec in Kapuskasing—they will have what's called a sustainable forestry licence that they signed with the ministry, with the crown. What that licence does is a couple of things. It

says you will get access to a particular geographic part of land in order to ensure that you have the supply of wood needed to run your mill. In exchange, you must manage that forest from the perspective of figuring out how much wood is going to be cut, where it's going to be cut, how it's going to be cut, how that's going to impact the environment, how we manage the fauna, how we manage the ecosystem and then replant that once the wood is taken out. The only way that you can cancel a licence under the current system is if a forest company was not to live up to that agreement. If the forest company was doing things that were outside of what's agreed to in the licence, and the agreement to the licence is the only way that you can cancel the licence itself—and I'll talk about that later. But if there is unutilized timber on that licence, the minister has the ability to reallocate the timber. I know that.

My good friend Jerry Ouellette—I'll tell a little story. Mr. Ouellette was the Minister of Natural Resources —

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Could you refer to the member's riding rather than name?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** If I knew what it was, Madam Speaker, I'd use it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The member from Oshawa.

I want to just stop at this point and say I want the record to show that if I ever run for Speaker, you guys are in trouble because I can't remember riding names. I just remember people's names. Use that against me if anybody wants to run against me as Speaker. I'm sure this will come back to bite me one day.

Anyway, I just want to say to the member from Oshawa—he was the Minister of Natural Resources back in the day, under the Harris government, and at that time we had a mill in Kirkland Lake that wanted to close down, and they were going to hang on to the wood. They were going to send it off to Cochrane and Timmins in order to be reprocessed. I think it was, the large wood would go to Timmins and the small wood would go to Cochrane. Tembec came to me at the time and said, "Look, this is a great thing for Timmins, this is great for Cochrane. You should be happy. You should sign on to this." I said, "Absolutely not, because if I allow you to do that, the minister each and every time after is going to allow you to keep the wood and do what you want with it." I went to the Minister of Natural Resources, Jerry Ouellette, the member from Oshawa, who basically intervened. We had a meeting in my office in the middle of the night, when we used to be on night sessions. We had Rob Galloway, who I believe was the director of MNR for that particular branch at the time. The MNR wanted to give Tembec the ability to bring that wood and to keep it and do what they wanted with it, but Mr. Ouellette, the member from Oshawa, intervened and said, "No, under the act, I control the wood. I can reallocate, I can do all of those things, and if Tembec is going to close its doors, I'm taking the wood back." So there is precedent in the law to be able to do that. That's been my argument with this government from the very beginning,

from the time that Mr. Ramsay took over, the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane, John Vanthof—no, that's the next one, sorry. The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane was the Minister of Natural Resources. I argued that you should use your authority under the act when a company closes down, as they did at Opasatika at the beginning of the term of the Liberal government.

The position that the crown should have taken is, "Tembec, first of all, what can we do to help you keep that mill open?" That should have been our first response. If, at the end of the day, Tembec was going to close that mill, the Minister of Natural Resources of the day should have said, "All right, if you close the mill, I'm taking the wood back." He had the authority to do that, and I know that because I was in on drafting the act, and Mr. Ouellette knows that because he was the minister who had to enact the act. So for this government to say, "No, we don't have the authority," pales in the reality of both precedent and what was in the bill.

So I don't buy for two seconds that the changes in this act are needed in order to reallocate unutilized timber, because the act clearly says now, "If you don't use the wood, if you close down your mill, we, as a crown, can take the wood back."

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It also says, "If you've got X amount of wood and you only need a smaller portion of what X can provide, then the crown can reallocate that wood any way that they want, but it has to be through an RFP process." I shouldn't say any way they want; it has to be done by an RFP process.

The crown in this case, the government of Ontario, Mr. McGuinty's government, hasn't done that because they felt that they didn't want to get into the management of allocating timber. Why is that? Because the Ministry of Natural Resources has been decimated. The staff that used to exist at MNR who were there to be able to do this kind of work are no longer employed by the government, because it has been downsized to a former shell of itself when it comes to management on the wood.

I want to say for the record that I've got a lot of fights with MNR. Am I happy about some of the stuff they're doing about closing down roads, and others? No. I know a lot of people where I come from are mad at MNR. In fact, a good friend of ours calls it the "ministry of no response." He's a good friend of ours that we both know in Timmins, and you know who I'm talking about.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Roger; exactly.

But the point is, what MNR did really well was, when dealing with the forestry side of their ministry, they were world leaders. We need to understand that the Ministry of Natural Resources had one of the best, most comprehensive, most green, most ecological management systems of the forest in the world, and we had the best staff to be able to manage and to make sure that the decisions that were made were done in keeping with good environmental and good sustainability practices in the province. But instead, the government in this case, the McGuinty

government, said, "No, we're not going to do that. We're going to allow the companies to hold on to the wood." So I just want to say, for the record, up front: We don't need to change the act to reallocate timber.

The second thing I want to talk about is reallocation. This is one that scares the heck out of me, or as they say, the bejesus. We are now proposing in this bill—and I read it into the record a little while ago, but somehow or other the bill that I had on my desk has disappeared; don't ask me where it went to.

We are inserting a section in Bill 151 that says once you sign a licence with the crown—for example, let's say you're Tembec, and you signed a licence a number of years ago on the Gordon Cosens Forest—it is virtually impossible for the security of tenure to be lost unless you muck up. You cannot, as an SFL holder, a sustainable forest licence holder, lose your wood under the current system if you live up to the conditions of your licence. The conditions of your licence are well spelled out in the legislation and the regulation, but more importantly in the forest management plan itself.

That is a good thing because what it does is it allows the forest company then to say, "Okay, I want to modernize myself. I've got a \$10-million or a \$20-million upgrade to do to my plant," or "I want to upgrade in order to make myself more efficient" or to increase production because they've got more wood, or whatever it might be. You can go to the bank and you can say, "I want to finance this," or you can go to the market and have it financed. How? Because you've got security of the wood. The wood is worth money. The first thing they look at is: Do you have the wood? And if you have the wood, they say, "Okay, fine. This is a project that will make money over a period of time; we're prepared to lend you the money." If you start playing with the tenure system and you start weakening the security of tenure for the forest companies, it is really a dangerous, dangerous thing.

We laughed at banana republics that do this. There are banana republics out in the world that will do things like all of a sudden come in and scoop up an oil company or do whatever it might be to a company that has done some investments. We call those places banana republics. Well, we're about to become our own banana republic. If you get a minister of the crown, a Premier or a political party who for some reason doesn't like that particular company, under the section in the bill that I am going to read in a second, you could actually scoop up the licence without cause.

There would be an argument to go to court, and I'm sure the company would go to court, but what the government has written into the law is truly scary. It's under section 38 or 41; I can't quite remember. You'll have to bear with me because I had the bill on my desk and somebody took it away. Oh, there it is. One second. Can I just go and grab that?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. John O'Toole):** Sure.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I found the culprit; it was the former Minister of Natural Resources who stole it.

It basically says—this is really interesting; this has got to be read into the record—under section 41.1(1): "On the recommendation of the minister, the Lieutenant Governor in Council"—that's the cabinet—"may by order cancel any of the following:

"1. An agreement to supply forest resources entered into under section 25." Section 25 is these new licences.

"2. A forest resource licence." That's an SFL, for those who don't understand, a sustainable forestry licence.

"3. Any agreement with or commitment of the crown in right of Ontario for the supply or the directing of forest resources from a crown forest." That means a directive.

For example, Tembec, which used to operate the mill in Smooth Rock Falls: All of the chips that went to that mill were by way of a directive of the crown, by the minister.

The minister, at a whim, can cancel it, under what I see over here. That's pretty scary stuff. Then it says, "Grounds for cancellation." You read on and you say, "Oh, it can't be all that bad, because there are grounds by which you can cancel." It says:

"(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make an order under subsection (1) if the Lieutenant Governor in Council is of the opinion that,

"(a) the order is necessary or desirable to facilitate or permit the issuance of a forest resource licence to an Ontario local forest management corporation that has been, or is proposed to be, established."

We understand what that means. It means that if two or three companies decide to come together to make a co-operative SFL, the crown has the authority to essentially change the licence. That's why they've put that in there. I understand that. That's okay.

"(b) the party holding the agreement, licence or commitment is not optimally using the forest resources as permitted in the agreement, licence or commitment...." If you read that, that is basically saying that, "If you're not using the wood to the degree that you're supposed to, we can take it back from you." I think some forest companies may even have a problem with that one, because that could be read into a whole bunch of things. But essentially it would give the crown the ability to do what we have now in the act, which is that if you have unutilized timber, you can reallocate.

But here's the kicker. This is where we become the banana republic:

"(c) the order is necessary or desirable for such other reasons, whether or not the reasons are related to the reasons set out in clauses (a) or (b)"—which I just read—"as are prescribed by the regulations."

Wow; talk about a banana republic. That means to say that if a government decides it's in a fight with someone—they don't like a particular operator—they technically could cancel the licence. You can't play with this stuff. If I own a forest company—I'm a New Democrat. You'd think that I'd be the last guy making this argument, but I understand, as a New Democrat, how important these licences are to the jobs of the members who

work in these mills and the communities that survive out of the wages from those mills. If you start playing with the tenure of the licence, that means the forest company is in a position where they won't be able to do the kinds of investments they want to modernize their mills and make it more efficient because the bank will look at that and say, "You really don't have security of tenure."

Right now, let's say you have an NDP government, in the next election, that likes you, and the next time you've got party X that doesn't like you. Effectively, you could take the wood back. I just think that that is really, really dangerous stuff. I know I'm going to get all kinds of explanations when we go to committee on this, but I want to put that first one on the record. It is really a dangerous precedent. On that point, enough said. I've laid it out. I look forward to committee, to being able to deal with that issue. But I think that is a really dangerous precedent: for us, all of a sudden, to start playing with the security of tenure of forest companies, because if we do that, I think we're really going down a slippery slope.

The second part: The government is going to change the current licensing system. Currently, the licence system we have is one that says that if you're a forest company and you want to open up a mill or you have a mill that's running, you need a sustainable forestry licence. That licence gives you access to wood, so that you have security of supply. But, more importantly, it makes you responsible for the planning of how that wood will be cut and then making sure that you manage that forest, once you've cut the trees, from the perspective of reforestation.

If one takes the time, as I've done before with people, and looks from the air—you get in a plane and you start looking around where we've been cutting in northern Ontario—there are some really good stories to be told. What people need to understand is that forestry is like agriculture. It happens to be that our crop takes 80 years to grow. In the field of a farmer, it normally takes less than a year to grow. So we manage our crop. Our crop is trees. We have an 80-year cycle to be able to cut those trees.

Essentially, what we do is, we give a licence to a company and we say, "Here's enough wood in this geographic area for you, over an 80-year or 90-year cycle, depending on where you live, to be able to start cutting block 1 so, by the time you end up at block 80, 80 years later, block 1 is regrowth. You can then go back into block 1 and start all over again."

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What is even better is that when we do the management of how we're going to cut those various blocks, you have to take into account what this means to the marten, to the moose, to the cottager, to the angler and the fisherman, to the hunter or the First Nation. The forest management plan about how that block is going to be cut—you have to look at how it's going to affect everyone else, and I think that's something we should be very proud of.

Is it without a difficulty? Is it without controversy, at times? Absolutely not, because you're competing.

You've got, on the one side, the company that wants to cut the trees and the workers who want the jobs and the community that wants the wealth, and on the other side, you may have a cottager who says, "No, I don't want those trees in my backyard cut," or the environmentalist who says, "No, I don't want trees cut at all in that area." So I understand there is some conflict about how you make that happen, but we have a very good system of being able to manage the forest.

I'd just say to my friends here in the assembly who don't live in the north and don't have a good appreciation of what we do when it comes to forestry that the forest industry is one of the more successful examples in Ontario where we can talk about how we do things sustainably as an industry. It is a farming business, except that our crop takes 80 years to grow. We happen to cut things like poplar and black spruce and jack pine and other trees that are used in the commodity sales of lumber, and also in value-added products, when it comes to furniture and everything else. That's the system we currently have.

The government wants to move from these SFLs—sustainable forestry licences—to something else. So let's examine what the government wants to look at. They're looking now at having two different types of licences.

We'll start with the first licence, which is the licence that will be the one that, eventually, the forest companies go to. Those will be enhanced shareholder SFLs. So let's say that you're Tembec in Kapuskasing; Tembec in Hearst; Columbia Forest Products; you're Lecours; maybe Haavalsrud—probably not Abitibi; maybe Grant or something like that. What they're going to do is say, "Why don't you go out there and figure out how you can all get together and form one big co-op that will manage the forest?" The idea is that it will somehow reduce the costs of doing business for the forest company. There is an argument there, and I get it. If you talk to people that operate forest companies, to a degree they get it as well.

There are some dangers in going down this road, and I just want to talk about those for a second. One of the things that's going to happen when we do that is that we're essentially going to strip out of those companies all of those people who currently work in the forestry section of the company. Let's say you're Tembec in Kapuskasing—I'll use them as an example again. They have a forestry section within the company that does all of the management of the wood, the cutting of the wood, the getting of the wood and bringing it to the mill and the replanting after. You're going to take all of those people out of those particular companies, eventually—I hope that's what's going to happen—and they will end up going to work for this new entity called the enhanced SFL company, whatever they're going to call it, because they essentially now will manage the wood.

What should happen is that each company will say, "I want X amount of wood in order to operate my mill and make sure the wood is in the yard at a certain time," and everything should be hunky-dory. The problem with that particular approach over the longer term, from my sense,

is that it could eventually put an upward pressure on the price of wood, because on the other side we're going to be forming what are called the local forest management corporations, the LFMCS. They're going to be on a complete bid system when it comes to the wood. So you're going to have a situation where—you know as well as I do that a place like Kapuskasing doesn't get all of its wood from the Gordon Cosens Forest. They get, quite frankly, a lot of their wood from other SFL holders who need to sell their chips. What you're going to end up with is that some of the wood that ends up in that chip pile from the forest companies is going to come out of these LFMCS, and the LFMCS will be on a complete bid system when it comes to the wood. Currently, when you buy wood you pay a stumpage fee to the crown for having cut the tree and then you manage, as I said, through your sustainable forestry licence—all of the costs of cutting then go into whatever it costs you to bring it into the mill. But there's no profit that's added to that. In other words, the company that cuts the wood is the company that uses the wood, so you're not adding a profit to the activity of cutting the wood, other than paying your contractors to do so. If you now start buying wood from the LFMCS, you're going to end up with two cost factors, two pressures to push your price up.

The first one will be a bid system. Rather than having a set price for wood as per the cost of cutting the wood plus the stumpage, you're going to have companies bidding on the wood. If you're in a situation where there's a shortage of wood or, let's say, a competing jurisdiction like Quebec, Manitoba or the United States wants that wood, they can put a bid on the wood. Nothing would stop them from doing that. Then you would end up in a situation where an Ontario company would be bidding on wood for an Ontario mill competing against somebody in Quebec who has a shortage of wood—in my area—or Manitoba if you're in the northwest or the United States where they have a shortage of wood pushing up the price of the wood. The effect of that is it would eventually add costs to the mill that ends up using the wood. That could be Kimberly-Clark Kapuskasing, which is not even in the LFMCS because they're going to get some of their wood chips derivative from those particular LFMCS. You're going to have an upward pressure as far as price on the bid as the price of wood goes up.

Here's the other part: This organization has got to make a profit because they've got to pay for their entire cost of running their company and make a few bucks on the side for a rainy day. That will push the price of the wood up again. Somebody will say, "Oh well, it's not going to be significant. Don't worry about it." Listen, if you're Kimberly-Clark Kapuskasing in the dark days that we've had over the last five or six years, every extra penny a tonne that you've got to pay affects your bottom line.

I'll tell you, we've come close to losing the largest employer in Kapuskasing as a result of the cost of doing business in Ontario already: cost of electricity, cost of wood, cost of everything. That mill, quite frankly, has

struggled to keep its doors open. I'm really proud of the work the local management has done there, the work that the municipality has done and the work that the unions have done to come together to figure out ways to reduce costs to that operation so that they can keep their doors open. We may be putting that in jeopardy as a result of increasing the price of the wood when it comes to the wood that comes off the LFMCS.

Plus, the ones that have the enhanced shareholder licences could have an increased cost to their wood because there may be a competition within themselves. For example, in the case I gave you a little while ago, let's say you had Haaavaldsrud, you had Lecours Lumber, you had Columbia Forest Products, you had Grant and Tembec all bidding on the wood. Grant all of a sudden—Grant would be out of the picture because they need poplar. Let's stick with the conifer. Let's say one of the conifer producers is deciding that they want to increase their production. They're just going to say they're prepared to pay more for the wood. Wouldn't you? That will push the price of wood up. So the companies will lose control over the price of wood, further adding costs of doing business. Ontario is already one of the most expensive, costliest jurisdictions for the forest companies to do business in. Why in heaven's name are we going to take a chance to make things even more expensive for these companies?

Listen, I've got to say again, I'm a New Democrat. People are going to say, "Why is a New Democrat worried about a big corporation like Tembec?" I'll tell you why: because the people I represent work in those companies. If they don't have a job because the price of wood or whatever goes up, and they close down the mill, it's like Opasatika. It's like Smooth Rock Falls. It's like Wawa. It's like Dubreuilville. It's like Kirkland Lake and 30 other communities across northern Ontario that have lost their only employer in town. They end up without a job, and they've got to move.

I am really concerned about this because I don't think we should be mucking about with the security of wood flow into these mills and the cost of the wood. From my perspective, what you need to have is a system that is one that has a predictable cost of the wood and that does a good job of managing the ecosystem and making sure we do the right thing when it comes to managing the forest, but most important, that we allow to have the security of supply and we have a cost that's affordable.

I see this in the end—it's not going to happen tomorrow, it's not going to happen two years from now, but five and 10 years from now, mark my word, wood will be more expensive as a result of this compared to what we have now if we left it alone.

I just say to the government, why are you doing this? Who are you trying to please? My friend Rosario Marchese has a test. Who's glad, who's sad and who's mad? Well, who's glad? I didn't hear anybody, so I guess there is no one. Maybe the Liberal government is glad. Well, we're all mad at it, so who cares? Who's sad? A whole bunch of people in northern Ontario who make

their living out of the forestry sector. And who's mad? Pretty well everybody: municipalities, forest companies, the Ontario Forest Industries Association—OFIA—the owners of the mills, the workers in the mills, the unions. Nobody's happy with these guys for what they're doing. You've got to ask yourself, if it doesn't pass the who's glad, who's mad and who's sad test, What are these guys up to? Why are they doing this?

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It just amazes me—and I digress for a second. The Liberals, in the last year or year and a half, have really been quite amazing. If they could pick a fight and poke a finger in somebody's eye, they've been doing it. HST—poke. Are you mad? The Far North Act to the First Nations—poke. Are you mad? The Grow North plan—my God, we're actually laughing at that one; I don't think we're so mad at that one. We think that one's a bit of a joke. It's just like they're poking everybody in the eye.

I don't know why Liberals are so intent on making everybody mad, other than I think they're really trying to make sure the NDP wins the next election. I want to thank them for that, because I think the result will be exactly that in northern Ontario. I would not want to be a Liberal on the next ballot in northern Ontario. I'm going to say now that I think a whole bunch of are you in more trouble electorally than you realize. But that's a whole other discussion.

The LFMCS the government wishes to create are going to set up a situation where we'll have to go to a more American system for bidding our wood. Here's one of the other dangers—I'm an American forest company. I love to say that Ontario is subsidizing its wood, and I love going before the World Trade Organization and before whatever NAFTA panel and saying, "There goes Canada again." How many times have they done it now, my friend from Oshawa? Seven? Eight? Something like that? Seven or eight times—I can't remember—they've come by.

Here's one of the dangers under the LFMCS. You go to a complete bidding process on wood. Can they still get a subsidy to do the roads? Think about it. We've argued for years, rightfully so, and it's been agreed with by the tribunals, that we don't subsidize our industry because we have a completely different system. We're not a bid system; it's not a competitive wood bidding system. We have crown land that is managed by the crown. It is done not-for-profit when it comes to cutting the wood to supply our mills. There is no subsidy that goes into doing this. If you go to a straight bidding process on an LPMC and I'm an American owner of a mill and I say, "Oh, look at this. Ontario has got a program to subsidize the cost of roads to extract trees out of the forest and they're on a bid system," they're going to say, "Well then, add it to your cost, add it to the tree. Don't take the money from the government."

I see the member from Algoma—

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Manitoulin.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:**—Manitoulin; thank you. I don't do that on purpose. Other than Timmins—James Bay—

that's just the way I am. The member from Algoma—Manitoulin is smiling, but I don't know if you're smiling because you agree or you're just very happy. I don't know which it is.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I'm amazed.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, he's amazed. I'm amazed, too, I must say.

I say that you will potentially be in a situation where the Americans will argue that we are subsidizing in what is a competitive bidding system. That's a pretty dangerous thing to do, my friends. So you'll be in a system where, again, you're going to have to add more cost to the wood.

Here's the other one, and I really want an answer to this. Okay, times are good. The LPMC is selling wood at a profit and everything is fine and wonderful. It's a great market right now, let's pretend. All of a sudden we end up as we did back about seven years ago, and the market starts to go south, as we say, the market starts to drop and the bid price on the wood is not sufficient to cover the entire cost of the LPMC. Who's going to pay for the reforestation? Who's going to pay for the forest management that has to be done? Who's going to ensure that we plant trees where we have cut? Who's going to make sure we do the things we need to do to cut the trees in a sustainable way?

You will be in a situation where, yes, there will be a law forcing them to do it, because the law is on the books, but the company is going to be in the position of saying, "We don't have the money." So the crown, I would think, is then going to have to pony up the money. What happens when the crown ponies up the money to offset the loss of revenue they've got on the sale of the wood because of a down market and they're not making money, and we need to ensure that the reforestation is done?

We're back into the same argument with the Americans. This doesn't protect us from countervail, I would argue; this puts us in a worse position on countervail. We have a good system. We have a system that for seven, eight or nine times, whatever it is that we've gone before the tribunals, they've agreed with us and said, "No, Ontario does not subsidize its forestry industry." Each and every time we've won. The Americans keep on coming back. That's a whole other argument, you know, what we should do about that. But we've never lost before the tribunals.

I am telling you, these LFMCS, by putting them into a bid system, put us into a position where the price of wood goes down, and all of a sudden, we don't have the money to do the proper forest management or replanting. Somebody is going to have to pay for it, because all of my friends in the south who are part of the environmental movement are going to be putting a magnifying glass on what is happening up in that forest. They're going to say, "Government, whoever you are, what's going on? Why are you allowing those guys to cut trees and not replant and do all these nasty things?" They're going to be up there with their cameras and their protests—rightfully so,

in that case. Somebody is going to have—the political pressure will be to do something. We either shut them down, which I don't think anybody is going to want to do, or we're going have to pony up from the province to give them money to do what they should be doing in the first place.

Who's thinking this stuff up? I really don't know sometimes. I just wonder why we would put ourselves in that position. I just say, on the LPMC, on that point in regard to the allocation of wood and the price, it's really dangerous stuff when it comes to what it sets us up for when it comes to countervail.

On the side of the enhanced licences, the enhanced shareholder licence on the SFLs, we end up in a situation where the price of wood there could be affected as well, because some of the wood for those companies comes from what will be the local forest management corporations, LPMCs, and there will be a competition within those newly formed corporations at one point, because companies are not a static thing. The company doesn't always just cut and produce 600,000 cubic metres of wood. At one point, because of cost, they may want to increase their production to lower the cost per unit. That means they are going to need more wood and there will be a competition for that wood within these new shareholder licences. It will eventually, especially when the market is good, throw the price of wood up. Then, we're in a problem when the market goes down.

I just say to my friends across the way in the Liberal Party: Boy, I don't know where you think this stuff up, because it's pretty dangerous when you stop to think what the ramifications are.

Now, the other thing: Who controls the forest? There is a debate out in Ontario. In northern Ontario, we know it well. We have, on the one end, forest companies that want to be able to manage their forest and do the things that they are doing now and are looking for the least amount of problems as possible when it comes to people giving them a hard time about what it is that is their business. On the other side, you've got the environmental groups who say, "We'd be happy if there was no wood cut." Somewhere in between—right?—are the rest of us. I just say to my friends here in the House who are listening to today: The system that we are going in, I think, does not do a heck of a lot in order to address that particular debate either. Because in the end, I think that we've struck a fairly good balance under the sustainable forestry development act about how we manage our forest now and how we price our wood. I think changing it and creating this transition time, moving to the LPMCs and moving over to the enhanced shareholder licences, will create a flux, a dynamic in the change which will, quite frankly, insert people into this debate on both sides that may not be as helpful as we want. That's to be seen. At the end of the day, we'll see where that goes.

But the big debate is: Who controls the wood? On the one hand, you've got the companies who say, "I want to control the wood." You've got, in a community like Hearst or Opasatika, "I want to control the wood." Why

those communities want to be able to control the wood is because they've seen what has happened to them.

You're Opasatika, a small community, 600 people. The only employer in town was a sawmill, and the company, Tembec in this case, decided to close it down some years ago. Rather than the wood being left and allocated to that community or set in abeyance for that community to come up with a restructuring plan or a new operator or owner of a new mill, the wood was kept by the company.

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I argue that wood could have been reallocated to the community that quite easily through an RFP process. That already exists in law. But there are two sides to the argument. There are those who want to see more community control of the wood and there are those on the other side who don't want to see community control of the wood. I think we need to strike a balance. We need to make sure that the forest company, on the one hand, has security of supply and is able to do the job they have to do without adding costs to the process, but on the other hand, we need to make sure that communities have a say.

I'll give you the story of two communities in my riding. Opasatika is the first one. Opasatika lost their mill. It used to be the Tembec mill in Opasatika. They were devastated when that mill shut down. Tembec took the wood; they kept it; some of that wood was redirected to other mills; some of it is not being used to this today. The government of the day said, "Listen, the new future is biomass. That's the new future. Go and find somebody who's willing to build a biomass plant and we'll do business."

So the community of Opasatika hired some folk, along with some others, and the mayor at the time, Monsieur Nolet, and they did a whole bunch of work over a period of time and spent a lot of money in order to pull together some investors and put together a plan about how they could start a biomass plant in that community. They went to the crown and they said, "Listen, we need wood to be able to operate our mill. What can you do for us?" They said, "Well, you know what? It's the companies that control the wood," which was not the case, I argue; the crown could have easily allocated that timber. They were told, "Go do a business-to-business deal with somebody who has a licence."

They went to Hearst Forest Management, and Hearst Forest Management negotiated a deal with them and they gave them 100,000 cubic metres of wood. It's not a lot in the big scheme of things but it was enough for them to interest people in investing in their community.

They had a signed agreement—a signed agreement, on paper—with the first FMA in order to allocate that they can buy up to 100,000 cubic metres of wood from that particular forest licence. They went out and then said, "Okay, so what happens now? We have 100,000 cubic metres that's secured. Can we find some more wood?" They figured they could go to the market and buy wood from companies that have excess wood in different areas that want to cut it. Sometimes you go into a block,

you've got to cut certain trees that you may not need to be able to get to what you want, or there are mixed species in the cut. They were going to make deals, business-to-business, to get the rest of the wood.

They felt fairly confident with the 100,000 cubic metres that they had signed with Hearst FMA and what they could secure in the market; they could probably get about 300,000 cubic metres of wood. They were in the game.

Mr. Gravelle, the minister of mines and forestry, whatever it's called, announced there would be an RFP process for the wood, something I applauded at the time. When I first heard the news that the government was going to announce a process for communities to get access to unutilized timber, I thought: Great. Opasatika, which needs another 200,000 cubic metres of wood, is going to have a process by which they can identify wood that's not being used somewhere and they're going to be able to bid on it, and if they've got a good project that's solid and sound, they're going to get a facility management licence and they're going to be able to go ahead and start their mill in Opasatika in two or three years' time.

I was feeling rather good and I actually commented to the positiveness of what the government was announcing. The problem is, do you know what they announced? They took the 100,000 cubic metres of wood away that they had negotiated with Hearst FMA. The RFP process took the contract that Hearst FMA had with Opasatika and said, "No, we're taking that wood. It's ours. It's all to be reallocated."

You can imagine how that hit the community. It was like a ton of bricks. The government says, "Your mill is closed. Go into the biomass business." They go out to try to do the biomass business, they secure a third of the wood they need by way of a contract with another SFL holder, and the government takes the contract away and says, "Too bad. Start all over again." What do you think the investors did? The investors left, and to this day the community has no ability to start a plant because the government has actually made things worse, not better, in getting into that RFP process.

Mayor Nolet lost his election last fall, and I would argue that probably one of the reasons he lost was because of that. It was like the Rob Ford thing, to a small degree. People in the community felt there was nothing going on—there was all this promise of a biomass mill coming to their community—so people supported the other candidate. She's a wonderful mayor; I've got nothing against her. She's just the person who happened to be on the ballot. People felt, "Obviously, this didn't work; let's try something else." Unfortunately, Monsieur Nolet took the bullet for the Liberal government in this election, I would say. I think that's rather unfortunate, because Mayor Nolet was doing a good job with his council, and with the investors and others, to make something happen, and he had the rug pulled out from underneath him. I feel for them, because that community is a strong, dynamic community that wants to survive, and they've been thrown another curve.

Smooth Rock Falls lost their only employer, the Tembec mill. It was a pulp mill. There were, I believe, about 800,000 cubic metres of wood associated with that mill. So the community went out and found not one but two proposals to start up. One was a cedar plant and the other one was a biomass plant. They had the investors at the table. They had the money to be able to do what had to be done—a similar story to Opasatika's.

They went to the crown and they said, "All right, you're telling us to go into the biomass business." First of all, they did the cedar one. They said, "We're going to go into the cedar business. There's cedar in our area. This is a good idea. We have an opportunity." They did everything they were supposed to do. They were led to believe they were going to get access to cedar. The government went through a proposal and then allocated the timber to another community. It's good for that community, because there's only so much cedar around, but this particular community lost out. That was partly the reason. It's not all the fault of the provincial government; I think they were about half to blame. The other part was the amount of cedar that was available.

I think the process by which you allocated should have been reflective of the situation of Smooth Rock Falls. Here was a community that had lost its only employer. In the consideration, there should have been some additional weight given to the community that had lost their only employer, over the community that was trying to build a new plant.

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But you know as well as I do that it's a competition, Mr. Brown. We're all competing for the same wood. I understand the sensitivities of that. Chapeau deserves what they got. That's not my argument.

My argument is that there is little wood available, and the process is a difficult one for communities at best. I'm saying there should have been some weight given to the situation Smooth Rock Falls was in. We can argue that Chapeau lost mills as well; I understand that. I'm just saying that there wasn't enough wood to go around; that was part of the problem. The point I'm making is that I think the allocation process was one that left a lot to be desired.

Here was a community that had 800,000 cubic metres of wood that it couldn't touch. They said, "Okay, we lost out on the cedar process fair and square. We lost out. We don't like it, but let's move on." So they go out and they say, "Okay, let's do a biomass project." They worked with, I think it was, Commerce Management Group and others in order to put together a package on the biomass project.

They did the deal on the biomass project, and what did they get at the end of the day? Pretty well the same. They dealt with the private corporations in order to get access to wood. And they said, "Whoa, hang on a second. We had 800,000 cubic metres of wood here. How come we can't get residual waste or chips, that aren't being used, to do a biomass project?" You know, get the tops and

limbs of the trees and all that kind of stuff—best end-use. The crown said, “No, no, no. Go negotiate with the companies.” “No, but you don’t understand, Crown. We had 800,000 cubic metres of wood.” In the end, they got nothing; they got no wood. Since the closure of the mill, a lot of the people in that community have moved away.

They see the trucks, with round logs on them, rolling up and down the highway and going to different places but not to their community. I fault the McGuinty government for that. They had wood; they had 800,000 cubic metres of wood. It should have been recognized that they could do something with that. They would never have used the full 800,000 cubic metres in that particular plant. There was enough wood to go around. But the government chose not to use its authority under the act to reallocate the timber they could have reallocated. There was wood available. I just say that it’s sad.

Then there’s the story of Wawa, which has been quite tragic for the community. The mill there has been closed down—how long? About two years now?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Longer.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It’s been longer; it’s been a while.

The problem they have is that after two years, if you don’t use the wood, it goes back to the crown. I understand; that’s not the argument.

The town is trying to make sure that the mill is sold to somebody, but if you don’t have the trees tied to it, that mill is worth nothing, so who’s going to buy it? The crown—in this case, the government—has done nothing to make sure that we at least give the community of Wawa a chance to find a buyer and has not said, “As long as you’re actively trying to seek a buyer and you’re moving forward in the progress of finding one, we’re going to make sure that that wood is secured.” To date, that has not been done, unless something has changed in the last couple of days. The last time I talked to people in Wawa, that was still the case.

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Then you’ve got Dubreuilville. They’ve been down for over two years, as well. I can’t remember exactly when they shut down. To make this story really short, the latest reallocation process has taken 200,000 cubic metres of wood away from that particular mill. So here’s Dubreuilville in a process of restructuring themselves to find another way to operate that mill, and they’ve now lost about 30% of the wood they need for that mill by losing that 200,000 cubic metres.

So if I’m skeptical of this government’s ability to deal with the allocation of wood, I’ve got good reason. The last seven years of their track record have been, quite frankly, pretty abysmal.

I think communities across northern Ontario are saying, “What we want is not for our government to give us big boxes of money; we want our government to be there, to roll up its sleeves and to work with us in finding solutions to the very hard situations that we find ourselves in in our communities.”

In the case of the Smooth Rock Falls, the Wawas, the Dubreuilvilles, the Opatikas and the 30 other commun-

ities in northern Ontario that have seen their mills shut down, they want a government—they understand it’s tough times. They understand there’s going to be some unemployment for a medium period of time, but they want the hope that when the economy turns—and it will turn; it is starting to turn—they can reposition themselves to come out of this and do something else with the wood that used to be there. This act does nothing to address that. There’s nothing in this act that gives the ability for the crown to say to a community, “You have some hope when it comes to the allocation of timber.” What this does is, it entrenches what we currently have—the allocation system—to a degree, but changes it in ways that I think will drive the price up and do other things, and that I think in the end doesn’t serve us well.

If you’re trying to make people happy who are on both sides of the argument about who controls the wood, my point is that I don’t think anybody is happy. The forest companies aren’t happy because they’ve lost security of tenure, and I can tell you that Opatatika is not happy because they don’t get the wood that they were looking for. This bill does nothing to address those issues. So who’s mad, who’s sad and who’s glad? It fails on all three points. The community of Opatatika is sad. They’ve lost their only employer in town. Are they glad? Absolutely not. But they’re pretty mad about what’s happening to them and the inability of this government to respond to the crisis in that community and the poor response in this bill that will not fix the main problem, which is the allocation of timber.

I want to end on this last point, and that is the issue of the amount of wood that’s available in the wood basket in northern Ontario. We are currently using about 14 million cubic metres—I don’t know exactly what it is. But the amount of wood that’s available over the longer run—once we come out of this particular dip that we’re in, we need to make sure that the wood is there. One of the things that you could do in this bill that I think would give northern communities a little bit of hope and certainly make those in the industry happy is to say, “We’re going to insert a clause in here that’s going to protect a certain amount of wood in perpetuity for the forest industry, for those farms in northern Ontario that cut trees,” and put a clause in this bill that says, “We will protect 26 million cubic metres. We will ensure a supply of 26 million cubic metres of wood through this bill.” That’s an amendment that I want to put forward. It will be interesting to see if the government wants to support it. There is this feeling out there that there is a move in Ontario by some to try to weaken the forest industry and to take away areas where wood is available and thus make it more expensive to access wood, because the wood that will be left is further and further away from the mill, and that less and less wood will be available, like under the Far North planning act, where you take 50% of the territory and you say there’s absolutely no activity that’s going to take place there forever and ever. There really is a sense that we’re losing access to fibre. So I think one of the things that this government could do that

would be a positive step would be to say, "Okay, we will insert a clause inside this bill that ensures there's going to be 26 million cubic metres of wood available for the industry."

A last point, and that will pretty well wrap up my time, and that is the process that we're into now. I would venture to guess that this House is not going to sit for very long in this spring session. I think this government wants to get out, and I understand. I get it. They're very unpopular in the polls—

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** You guys weren't even here for a year—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, I understand. I get how it works. We've all been members of government, some of us in this House, and we understand what happens. A government close to its mandate doesn't want to be in the House. They want to go out there and flip burgers on barbecues and kiss babies. That's what the government wants to do right now.

My point is this: The government is going to try to pass this bill on third reading this spring, and I see the parliamentary assistant nodding. It's not just because he's happy; it's because that's what they want to do. I'm saying that this is wrong. The government introducing this at second reading—okay, fine; I don't have a problem with that. Let's have a discussion. I don't have a problem with that at second reading.

Let's send it out to committee and have people come and talk to us, but don't pass this bill this spring. At the end of the day, what you have to have is a proper review of this particular bill by being able to travel into northern Ontario, to the communities that are affected—get into the Wawas of this world, get into the Thunder Bays, get into the communities that have been affected. To do that, you're going to have to have it done in the intersession, because the committees don't travel, normally, when the House is in session.

I'm just saying to the government, I warn you now: Do not pass this bill at third reading because this will become one of your Achilles heels in the next election.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I'm delighted my friend from Timmins—James Bay always makes an interesting act of condemnation of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, which was passed in this place in 1994. What he's talking about and what he has rambled on and on and here and there about has been very entertaining but not necessarily very relevant. What he's claiming is that the Crown Forest Sustainability Act has worked well, that the Crown Forest Sustainability Act has kept people employed in northern Ontario's forests for the last five to 10 years under some of the worst economic times ever known in the northern Ontario forest. He's claiming that's good. We should not change that. We should not allocate wood that is not doing anything out there in the forest these days. That's what he's claiming. And he's claiming that the allocations that are presently coming out have something really to do with the tenure, which is actually a different issue, and he knows it.

What we are allocating under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, which has existed since Howard Hampton passed it—it worked for a while and has worked relatively well—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask that the member refer to the riding.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Kenora; I'm sorry. Since the member for Kenora—Rainy River—that's when it happened.

What we are saying as a government is: It is unacceptable to leave millions of cubic metres out there in the forest. There are better ways to do it. He may have some better ideas. I've been waiting to hear them. We didn't hear any. He's not suggesting any alternatives. He's suggesting we go back and do what we've done, which has caused, in some part, the recession/depression in many of the towns I represent and in towns across the north, but in the context of 190,000 American forest workers unemployed because there is not a market for their product; 72 major pulp and paper mills in the US down—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Quebec.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Quebec, in worse shape than we are. They are now in the process of revising their acts. Let's get with the—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Timmins—James Bay speaks with a very large amount of insight into this issue. I think it's important that this afternoon, for myself, I can speak for educating ourselves on the importance of the forest industry in the north.

I am quite aware, in the research I've done, that in 1994 the Crown Forest Sustainability Act was passed and replaced the Crown Timber Act, which was in the 1800s.

The provincial government also returned to a licensing model replacing the forest management with sustainable forest licences—the SFL, they all call it. These acronyms and other appropriate important things about this industry are all things that I'm learning.

I find it important that the sustainable forest licence holders do not pay a fee to obtain a licence, but they are required to meet a wide range of regulations and guidelines related to consultation with the public, stakeholders, and aboriginal communities, forest planning and the conduct of harvesting renewal.

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There's a lot of regulation in this industry. I don't think a lot of people appreciate, as has been described—he said that if you've got 80 years' supply, they give you a plot that can be replaced in 80 years. Once you cut, you have to replant. So in that respect, he compared it to a farm operation, which I think is really part of educating the public of how important the forest industry is.

But when you look at the other side, I would say that the pro-environmental groups perhaps give the wrong message that these cuts—they often refer to them negatively as clear cuts etc. They leave the wrong impression.

In my riding, I know how important the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt are for a collective com-

munity. Everyone in Ontario benefits from those assets that we share in common. This is an important part for us to learn about this important industry in Ontario and that's why I'm listening here this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise today. As a member from the south, I certainly appreciate the importance of forestry and the lumber industry to northern Ontario, but also to the south as well. I think if you look at Ontario as a whole, one of the things you think of, one of the things that first comes to mind, is forestry and lumber.

It's been some time, as I understand it, since the tenure system was reviewed. It was designed quite some time ago. I think that, with an industry that provides as much importance to the economy as timber and lumber do, it's important we take a strategic review of it.

It seems to me that the work and the consultations that have been done to date within the industry and outside of the industry in the north and throughout the province have sent a loud and clear message to Queen's Park that Ontarians want change, that the industry wants to see change, that the industry wants to see organizational change within the industry.

The ideas that have been brought forward—the review that's taken place to date, the proposed framework—I think are key to building a strong forest economy. It's really needed to create the opportunities that are going to generate the right level, an increased level of investment, and it's going to ensure that the crown lands are renewed on a constant basis and enhanced so they can grow, while creating additional opportunities for jobs and economic prosperity, which is something you really want to see, whether you're from the north or the south of this province: a successful lumber industry.

We've heard that that change should be introduced and implemented in a way that's measured, in a way that's cautious. I think the proposed legislation we have before us indicates that we have listened to the feedback, and it's worthy of the support of all members of this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I very much appreciate the opportunity to comment on the member from Timmins–James Bay regarding his remarks on Bill 151.

The lifeblood of the north in Ontario used to be the forest and mining sector, and it's changed substantially. The comment still is that I don't necessarily hear the same thing from individuals in those companies that are up there. What's taking place and the concern that's coming forward is the impacts on the smaller players. The minister had mentioned that this would increase the number of smaller players, yet I expect that during today's debate—I'm going to get the opportunity to elaborate a lot more—I'd be interested to find out how that can play out, how the non-utilized or underutilized fibre can be used.

One of the previous members from the current government stated that they'll ensure that the forest is replanted in a sustainable fashion. Quite frankly, it's been taking place for generations now. You only have to look at what's happened in the Hearst area, for example, whereby the Hearst community and the industry itself have each planted over 100 million new trees in those areas to ensure a vibrant and a growing community, because they see it as generation to keep income and keep activities going in their community.

The one last thing I'd like to say is that all members need to realize one aspect about the forest: So long as the forest has value, it will continue to be a forest. When it loses its value, those individuals in those other areas surrounding those will find other uses, whether that's agriculture or in some other fashion. We need to keep our forests strong and do everything we can to make that happen.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Timmins–James Bay has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I heard everything. The parliamentary assistant is now saying that, because of the sustainable forestry development act of 1994, all of these companies are now suffering, and that has been the reason for the downturn. Give me a break. I said, and I believe, and I explained how. I have a former Minister of Natural Resources to my right and behind me; I have the previous Minister of Natural Resources in front of me. They are both very knowledgeable about what was in the act. I know what's in the current act. I was one of the guys who was there on committee when we dealt with it.

I have to tell you, Mr. Brown, member from Manitoulin—whatever—Algoma–Manitoulin—the minister currently has the right to reallocate unutilized timber. To make an argument that we need to change the act because the sustainable forestry development act doesn't give the crown the ability to reallocate timber is just ludicrous. You are able to do it, but the issue is, you chose not to do it. Now you're, as a fix, bringing in a process that, at the end of the day, is going to Americanize our wood system, drive the price of wood up and lower the tenure of security on the wood to our forest companies. At the end of the day, the parliamentary assistant is saying, "Yes, we're going to pass this this spring."

You will rue the day—and that day will be October 6, believe me—not just because of this bill; because of the many slashes and gashes that you have given to people of northern Ontario: in forestry, in mining, in hydro prices, on HST and everything else that you've done in order to awaken the rage of northern Ontario.

People in the north are mad, and there's a good reason. This government had the chance to do the right thing for seven years. They've chosen not to. Instead, what they do: They know best. They impose yet another solution from Toronto on northern Ontario. We want no part of it, and we'll talk to you, come October 6.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I'm delighted to have an opportunity to speak to the Legislature about this important bill.

If passed, Bill 151 would help re-energize Ontario's forest sector, create new jobs and attract new investment while ensuring that this public resource continues to be managed sustainably. We seek to do this by modernizing Ontario's tenure and timber pricing system. Modernizing this system would make Ontario's timber supply and prices more responsive to market demand, create new business opportunities for entrepreneurs, and make it easier for aboriginal peoples and communities to effectively participate in and benefit from Ontario's forest sector.

If passed, the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011, would help revitalize Ontario's forest industry. Our commitment to forest tenure and timber pricing reform is a sign of the government's confidence in the future of forestry. We have a strong primary sector with reasonable proximity to markets. We also have one of the world's largest forest areas that is independently certified as sustainably managed, which can give us a competitive advantage in today's growing green marketplace. If passed, the legislation would allow Ontario's forest sector to maximize these advantages.

The act would stimulate a bold rethink of how our forest sector will do business in the coming decade so that forestry activities continue to benefit not only the families, communities and businesses that rely directly on this sector, but all of Ontario.

In the end, the future of the industry is determined by the private sector. However, there is a critical public interest at play since the land belongs to all Ontarians. Unlocking the economic potential of Ontario's vast forest resource depends largely on the province's tenure and pricing policies. These policies determine who gets access to the resource and at what cost. They shape how the forest sector grows and evolves.

The Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act proposes to maintain the government's existing authority to manage this critical public resource and hold all participants accountable as they use crown land, while bringing more competition and opportunity to the forest sector. We are proposing changes to the tenure system that would make timber more readily accessible to businesses and would call for market forces to play a stronger role in allocating and pricing crown timber.

The proposed legislation would amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994, to better enable the government to move forward with forest tenure and pricing modernization. These amendments would support the establishment of local forest management companies and encourage the forest industry to move to enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences.

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We would continue to work with the forest industry, other key stakeholders and aboriginal people to further develop the operational details of the models and implementation plans. We would also work with these groups

to test and evaluate both the initial LFCs and the enhanced shareholder SFLs. The results of this analysis would put valuable insight into ongoing improvements and the way forward.

Our government held public consultations and round table discussions across the province. I was a participant at some and listened to much of the feedback. During the consultations, we heard from many Ontarians who expressed concerns about the change, and we heard from many who said the change was needed and could not come fast enough. We've listened carefully and have responded substantively to the concerns raised.

This, I believe, is evident from the positive response we've received to our proposed modified approach from, for example, the Ontario Forest Industries Association. The OFIA said our proposed path forward is "a positive development and provides much-needed certainty for operating mills, while creating opportunities for new investment in the sector."

From the Timmins Chamber of Commerce we're told that the use of enhanced shareholder SFLs is in line with their request for working with an existing industry development model that is benefiting their members. We've also had interest expressed from First Nations communities for the establishment of a local forest management company in their area.

Our government is committed to implementing a forest tenure and timber pricing system that works for Ontario, and we want to implement change in a responsible and measured manner. I believe the new tenure system proposed by the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act will achieve these goals and point us toward better access and use of our highly prized forest resources.

As the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, which has much of the crown forest in it and has many mills, I also have many friends who unfortunately aren't working at some of them these days because the timber hasn't been accessed because of market forces, in some cases for some years now, I would suggest. It is not responsible to leave these people unemployed when there are opportunities for our forests to provide the responsible jobs that all of Ontario needs. We need to continue our hard work to make sure this happens, and that we are moving forward in a measured manner that makes sense to all Ontarians who don't believe life is directed by looking in the rear-view mirror.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased to see the former Speaker participating. I know Algoma-Manitoulin is an area he represents very strongly and quite passionately as well. I'm sure he knows just how important this particular sector is to his community and to the people he represents. So I commend him for that.

I think the thing is that we're all trying to get it right. Actually, at the end of the day I'm a bit concerned, because some of the stuff I read says that instead of providing certainty and assurance for the forest sector, this

bill provides nothing more than indecision and uncertainty. So I don't know. As I said, I'm learning through this discussion, this debate.

I went to a reception last Wednesday night over at the Sutton Place—I'm not sure how many people here went—and I met a few people in the industry and a couple of people from law firms. I met a couple of people from the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Certainly, as I said, I know just how important this whole resource sector, including the forestry industry, is to Ontario, and we don't want to upset it. I have every confidence that our member from Oshawa, Jerry Ouellette—his experience as minister as well as his practical, first-hand experience of having worked in that industry—will shed light on it.

I really feel that the purpose of this debate, outside of the politics, is to get it right. This is an industry in trouble. Some of it is policy, some of it is the economy, some of it is the dollar, some of it is electricity—there are other factors here—and this shrinking of the competition model into the larger footprint size is what I gather is happening. Some of the smaller ones might get dealt out of this thing, from what I hear, but I have done a review of the critical assessments of the current tenured system. I've got a fairly good report on that, which I'm reading; it talks about sustainability and the importance of the industry being modernized. I know there were consultations, and I know that our member who is the critic on this file, Mr. Hillier, has attended some of the hearings in Lanark—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened with interest to the parliamentary assistant, and what's striking is that he wants people to somehow believe that the downturn in the forest sector is all about tenure, that somehow tenure is the issue that needs to be cracked. Well, I don't know where he's been, but just about every paper mill that's closed and every paper machine that's closed across northern Ontario said that the issue is the high cost of electricity, that their company is consolidating production in Quebec or the United States because the electricity costs are lower. Then that has a tumble-down effect upon sawmills, because sawmills can't operate unless they can (1) sell their lumber and (2) sell their residuals to paper mills. But if the paper mills are out of business, then the sawmill can't sell its residuals and they shut down. I haven't had anyone come into my office and talk about tenure.

The recent announcements made by the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry about new allocations of wood fibre to different enterprises has come under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. He didn't need new tenure legislation. He didn't need new regulations to say to companies, "Your mill is not operating. We're taking this wood fibre and we're allocating it to someone else." So I'm left to wonder, what is the need for this legislation? What does this legislation do that the Crown Forest Sustainability Act doesn't already

allow the government to do? The only thing I can think of is that this government is desperate to try to spin something as an answer to the incredible loss of jobs and economic activity in northern Ontario, and they think they can sell this idea of tenure. Let me tell you, this dog ain't gonna hunt.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I did listen to my colleague the member from Algoma-Manitoulin. It's interesting; when you read the business pages of the *Globe and Mail*, the *National Post* and the *Toronto Star*, when they interview people involved in the forest industry, they'll tell you the two big keys that led to the downturn were: (a) We lost 40% with the exchange rate—the forestry industry was doing extremely well when the dollar was 63 cents American, because for every product they sold, they were getting it at a 40% discount going into other markets; and (b) in the paper mill side of things, unfortunately people now, instead of reading newspapers, are going to electronic means to get most of their news information on a daily basis, which led to a decline in the demand for newsprint. That's been widely articulated in every business paper in North America. The forestry industry decline in northern Ontario—we've witnessed it in Quebec and Manitoba and throughout the United States.

It's interesting that this bill that's being put forward—the Ontario Forest Industries Association, which is the umbrella group for the forestry sector in northern Ontario, says, "The proposed path forward is a positive development and provides much-needed certainty for operating mills, while creating opportunities for new investment in the sector."

One of them that's been articulated just recently is going to be the demand for rayon. Rayon is a by-product of making paper in northern Ontario. The fact is that cotton now, as a commodity, has gone through the roof. They're looking at substituting rayon for cotton, which is going to be an opportunity for our forestry industry in northern Ontario to provide that fibre, which will be used in making clothing. There are going to be future opportunities, and the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, who's very knowledgeable in the industry, is going to be there championing these opportunities for his constituents in Algoma-Manitoulin.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

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**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I do appreciate the opportunity to add a few comments with respect to Bill 151. By no means do I consider myself an expert; in fact, I will readily acknowledge that there are many more members in this Legislature far more knowledgeable than I am on this particular subject, but I do understand the importance of the forest industry in Ontario and I did listen to the minister's lead-off speech, where he indicated that the bill was intended to restore the forest sector's competitiveness by modernizing forest management.

I would say that where we take particular issue with it, though, is with the creation of the LMFCs, the local

forest management corporations. My colleague the member from Lanark has referred to them as forest LHINs, in the sense that all they do is create another level of bureaucracy that can buffer the government from taking some difficult decisions.

I would note that when I took a look at Bill 151—there are some 17 pages in this bill, including the explanatory notes. I would say that there's only about a half-page, which is section 5, which talks about the actual purpose of these corporations. The rest of the information in this bill deals with their establishment, with the appointments they can make, their tenure and their ability to delegate their powers and duties to subsidiary corporations.

So it seemed to me that we would like to see far more content in this with respect to how these corporations are actually going to be modernizing and streamlining and making the forest industry more competitive, because what we see at this point is just another level of bureaucracy. I would suggest that surely there are other ways in order to bring about this competitiveness without leading to another level of bureaucracy, which is much more expensive and certainly much less straightforward than dealing with it directly.

I appreciate the opportunity to add these comments, and I will be listening intently to further discussion on this issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Algoma-Manitoulin has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I appreciate the comments from the member from Durham and the members from Kenora-Rainy River, Peterborough and Whitby-Oshawa.

In my constituency, forestry is one of the biggest—if not the biggest—producers of jobs and wealth. It is time to change the tenure system. It's not something to be afraid of. It isn't another level of bureaucracy. What it is is a different way to manage the forest and to get the appropriate return on investment that the people of Ontario and the people of the north deserve from the natural resource that is owned by all the people of Ontario but is particularly important to northern Ontario.

I represent places like Chapleau. Chapleau is a forest community and a Canadian Pacific community, but essentially the largest number of jobs comes from the forest industry. When I was first elected in 1999 for that part of my constituency, I believe Chapleau had three mills. We now have one.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** My friend from Oshawa says that there were four. He's probably right. I miscounted. But the point is that Tembec in Chapleau is producing more lumber today than the other mills put together, and they're doing it with less than half the workforce that those other mills had. The business has changed significantly. Competitive pressures are playing upon them. We need allocations to provide for good mills, like the Tembec one in Chapleau, so they can survive and do well. We need our forests managed sustainably. We need

jobs in the Dubreuilville, White River, Hornepayne and Wawa areas. Many of them are in the forests themselves, not actually at the mill.

I am convinced that we need to move forward with this bill quickly.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I very much appreciate the opportunity. I'm going to start off my debate—I probably shouldn't hold it up, I guess. I had a book given to me. It goes back to a time—and I'm going to read part of a section here. "As it expanded, the British policy for exploiting the North American timber lands proved less and less capable of controlling a burgeoning and difficult-to-regulate industry."

That goes back to 1806—1806, if you can imagine—and the impacts on society and things that are happening. I'm also going to add another section here that talks about the fact that Canada, "in account with 200 million feet yearly of choice pine logs exported free of duty to the manufacturer who lumbers in"—I can't read the name of the mill—spruce logs to American pulp mills. Then the response is "a free market in the United States for a limited quantity of Canadian price" and on and on and on. That goes back to 1890. Can you imagine that? The logging industry going back that far in the fights between various jurisdictions in protecting such an important commodity or industry in the province.

Not only that, but if you look at so many other aspects—if you look at some of the things that the members were talking about, and the former minister, who commented on the current minister's statements regarding the changing use of forestry, whether it's medical or chemical uses, and the rayon aspect that was brought forward is rather interesting—because if you go back and you read into those 1800s, in 1808, I think it was, where there was a huge concern in the province of Ontario because all the hemlock trees were close to being or were completely eradicated from all the Ontario forests because of the fact that hemlock bark was used in a tanning process. If you look at that time in history, there was a huge industry that dealt with buffalo hides and how they had to tan them and where they got all the materials and chemicals for it.

Yes, the industry is changing and it's going to change on an ongoing basis. Quite frankly, in the province of Ontario, the life blood, as I mentioned earlier on, in the north used to be, from my perspective, the forestry industry as well as the mining industry. Although the changes that have taken place—and it's not just the legislation that has taken place as well.

As other members have mentioned, whether it's the electricity costs—I met with the mayor of Kapuskasing, Mr. Alan Spacek. He was adamant that they had to have district electricity pricing so that they can compete with the other jurisdictions; that they didn't want the things that took place in Timmins, with Xstrata relocating to Quebec because of electricity prices, or what had taken place in the other western parts of Ontario, where companies left Ontario to go to get cheaper electricity.

These are some of the other aspects. It's not just the changing in the way it's brought forward. I'm going deal with that, because there are a lot of aspects of this bill that cause some great concern as well.

The member from Algoma-Manitoulin mentioned a couple of mills in Chapleau, but he probably hadn't taken into consideration Devon Mills, for example, that's located in Chapleau. Many people probably don't know this but it's a unique log-home-building process whereby it's kind of a processed log. All the logs are the same length and they use various materials, where they're actually using aspen, commonly referred to as poplar, which is the new-demand log home industry fibre, or forest or trees that are requested simply because poplar does not give off any fumes as does cedar or pine, which, supposedly, somebody has found something new—that it causes damage to individuals.

So Devon had a process whereby they had eight-, 10- and 12-inch logs all milled to the same size. Then they were dove-tailed in where the connecting link—where the logs overlap. It was all machine-done, and they sent it out on a process. Guess what? They're looking to sell, if they haven't sold already. I haven't spoken to them in about a couple of years, but they had a process there that just wasn't happening.

Not only that, but there was also probably another one. There are probably five that were in the Chapleau area. There were two cedar mills. When I commented on the minister's comments on this, it was about the fact that the underutilized or non-utilized fibre—and for those who don't know, fibre is actually trees, because that's what's utilized to make paper—it's the fibre; it's pulped down. Those trees are classified in the industry as fibre. It was the cedar mills in Chapleau that had shut down as well because of an allocation problem as well as other potential problems in the area, that they couldn't get their loads in and processed. They had a market for it but they just couldn't get the fibre to keep them going. That's how we move forward.

I want to go back to where the minister commented. He started off by saying that 81% of the province was publicly owned. Something doesn't seem to be clicking here because I recall, not so long ago, that 87% of the province was owned by the public. There's 6% not spoken for. Maybe I just misheard and maybe it's only 81% of the province that is actually forested. He spoke about, when I commented—he being the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry—the wood allocation. He said that this should increase the individuals participating in the activity. Well, most people don't realize that at one point in my life I ran a cutter-skidder operation, which is a method of cutting—cutter, cut the trees; skidder, take them out and take them to the mills. I was the number one supplier for a cedar mill, Bob Shafer's mill in Tyrone, as well as supplying Woodley in the local district. I handled that for a number of years before becoming elected.

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I have a little bit of experience, and, yes, how the industry has changed. We used to have the big skidders

with the giant tires on them that would go in, and quite frankly, they tore up the landscape in those forests quite heavily to the point now when a forestry machine, a forwarder, goes in, it'll take its claw now—it's about half a million dollars—well, it was; the cost of the machine is probably close to \$700,000. The clamps will come down and grab that tree and the computer will give you an exact readout of the number of board feet in that tree and the age of that tree.

Now a clear-cut in the industry is, effectively, a tree will go in and a company will say, "I need so many cube units"—and that's the way they measure trees, in the truckloads—"of 80-year-old poplar," or large-toothed aspen. They'll go in, grab those trees and they can take them right out, and within a year the track or the imprint or the footprint on the land is so minimal that the next year you can't even tell. Within a year, or probably two years, you look at that forest, and depending on the growth and the soil that's there, it has regenerated itself. Guess what? Only the 80-year-old poplars have been removed from that forest. They're doing such a great job and most people don't realize it.

As I mentioned earlier on, the community of Hearst has planted well over 100 million trees. Not only that, but the industry in that area has also planted over 100 million trees. Also, the public at large or the individuals may not realize that the trees are like kids growing up. Everybody thought it was a big joke but I was quite serious: When I had the privilege and honour to be the minister, one of the questions I had was that I wanted to know what the best carbon-converting years of a tree's life are. Actually, I was quite surprised to find out that it was a hybrid poplar tree that was the best producing, and the first 15 years of a tree's life are the most carbon-converting because they're growing like kids and they're all fighting and posturing against each other. There are a lot of great things that can be learned about that.

The concern I had regarding the minister in his statement was about what allocations would take place for the smaller player, that they'll be able to allocate the fibre in the area, whether it's the larches or the tamaracks or the cedars or any of the other non-utilized fibre out there. What would that mean? Would there be two companies operating in the same forest? If that's so, who's covering the costs for the roads or the insurance or the liability for anything that takes place during the actual cut operation?

When it comes down to this, it's going to be the smaller companies that will probably be the lesser players in this, as expected, because you've got the major ones out there that are interested in large volumes of fibre coming out of the forest, and the smaller ones are looking for specialty wood, which could be your cedars or any of the ones that are used, for example, in log home building or a number of other things. Once upon a time, the forest industry, as I mentioned, was established by the British government in Ontario for two components: the pine, which was used for masts in the British navy, as well as the oak, which was used for hoes. That's how it started and there was competition at that time. How are these smaller players going to be able to work in this specific area?

Some of the other areas, when you deal with the legislation, are on the second page, where it specifically talks about the fact that there would be subsidiaries allowed to be established. Before we get into the subsidiaries—I hope the PA will be able to address this, exactly on the reporting. In a number of ministries there is a reporting component—for example, in MNR—for the protection and enhancement fund, for example. It's just one of the numerous ones that require annual reporting. It seems I had to bring to the Legislature's attention that the report hadn't been turned in for three years, so there was no report. What's the penalty going to be if they do not comply with the 120-day requirement to have the report in on behalf of those new corporations that are being established?

Not only that, but one of the other areas that they specifically talk about is the subsidiaries being allowed to be formed. They ask two things: One is, there is no reporting requirement by the subsidiaries at all, which means this parent body can establish smaller units, and I'm not sure how it plays out according to the way everything has unfolded here. The minister stated they're looking at moving forward with two, although they did not give the parameters by which these two new corporations would be established and their boundaries. Is it going to be a northwest and a northeast? Then they're going to establish these smaller subsidiaries that are going to work in—well, in the northwest you'd have Nipigon or Longlac or Geraldton or Fort Frances or Dryden or any of the other areas. Are the smaller ones going to be taking place and where's the reporting requirement for them? There isn't any. That's a major concern.

The other part of the legislation as it deals with the major corporations, where the minister stated there would be two, would be the fact that the government can, as specifically stated—and I'll quote the section just so that they know exactly that to which I speak—provide funding grants to these corporations that can be or don't necessarily have to be used at that particular time.

As the member from Timmins—James Bay mentioned, there are always ongoing battles regarding the softwood lumber deal and so many other aspects. What's going to happen when these grant allocations are allocated to these corporations who are now managing and looking after all of the forest industry? Quite frankly, the first thing that I would expect to happen—although, right now, they're going to want to keep things quiet, “they” being the United States or the companies in the States, because with the Canadian dollar as high as it is, we're finding, according to Working Forest and the individuals who are writing into that—Working Forest is a magazine that deals with the forest industry in Ontario—Ontario is now the recipient of forest products because of the low US dollar.

The concern there is, if and when the Canadian dollar attains a level that is cost-advantageous for export from the province of Ontario into the United States, are they going to look at these grants that are allocated to the

corporations as a form of subsidy, which will effectively shut down softwood trade or the forest industry and exports in the province of Ontario? I'm hoping that the PA or the minister will be able to specifically give some background on how that'll come to be.

Another aspect is that I have some strong concerns because it mentions a 12-person board, but it doesn't really give a breakdown of how the board is going to be represented or chosen. There are a number of individuals. The members of the third party have expressed a concern about these individuals and how Toronto will be making decisions about what happens in northern Ontario, yet I'm sure that this is far more than northern Ontario. We've got individuals: There's C.W. Edwards in Pembroke; you've got Eddie Heideman in Eganville. There's a large number of operations throughout all of Ontario, not just the north.

How are these board members going to be chosen? You've got 12 members. Is there going to be specific representation from organizations? Has the forest industry been allocated a seat? Are the local communities on the various boards that they're applicable to and are the districts that they apply to going to have representation on there? It's all subject to provincial approval. However, there's not a breakdown of where it's coming forward—or, in the eyes of the forest industry and the scaremongers who may be out there, it's the protectionist organizations who will control a majority of seats on those boards.

Those are some of the concerns that have to be addressed to make sure that the people have this information when they're making decisions on behalf of the local community, because there's an impact there. I've already stated, quite frankly, that when you look at places like Hearst, where they've planted over 200 million trees, there are certainly great individuals who are contributing back to that which is so important to them.

Also, on the second page of it, it talks about the objects of the corporation, where it talks about “marketing, selling and enabling access to predictable and competitively priced supply of crown forest resources.” The minister needs to take a minute and walk across the floor—and I'm not trying to be a smart aleck in the ministry that he deals with, because in mining—many members here know that I have a prospector's licence that I've held since the 1980s. The difficulty with the prospector's licence—and I've met these individuals in the bush. I've been in places where it's been eight hours of nothing but trees, where you're going down wide open by a boat, and the first couple of hours you're like, “Hey, this is great,” but after the fourth hour it's, “When are we getting there?” Lo and behold, helicopters come in and bring in stakers—they were at the time.

What happens is, the line stakers would go in—they'd have a number of individuals and they would go to stake claims. What these individuals do is, they sell those claims back to the major mining organizations in the province of Ontario, and guess what? They tie up huge tracts of land that can't be developed by anybody else. Effectively, they eliminate their competition. The way a

prospector's licence works is, specifically, you have a year in which you can register your claim, and not only that, but you own the rights—the mining aspect—to that particular area for a year afterwards.

You might ask, why is this applicable to forestry? The same thing could potentially happen here that causes concern, as mentioned by the member from Timmins—James Bay. If companies wanted to eliminate competition, they could allocate or tender on a process, which could eliminate the competitor. A lot of these corporations are very effectively looking at cost-effectiveness, and big is good for them. If they can get orders for large quantities that would eliminate a competitor there, they may be tendering on areas that could eliminate a lot of those other individuals in the industry as well.

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So that's a large concern within the industry as well, making sure that those that are in there are going to be there for everyone, and that we have a competitive process that is not going to shut down the industry through the free trade process, which could be caused because of the fact that we're now subsidizing it or we're controlling it, as takes place in the mining sector.

Some of the other things: I only need to look at, again, the Working Forest, and some comments on the industry on this very specific aspect. I believe it's Rick Groves from Thunder Bay who specifically states that the number of licensed forests can be reduced to between 25 and 30 from 43. Or another quote on the specific one: They're looking at potentially going to five to 15 from 43.

Effectively, here the industry and the players are saying the exact same thing, that the end result of this is that we may only have five or 15 instead of 43 players participating in what's happening right there in the forest industry.

There are a number of other aspects. We've spoken about the industry, the impact of energy on the industry, but there's a number of other areas that have caused huge impacts in the forest sector, such as species at risk. Part of the difficulty there is the interpretation of the legislation found between the various districts within the province of Ontario. The eastern part is reading it in this fashion and the western part is reading it in that fashion. The companies have to establish separate standards for wherever they're harvesting in the province, and there is no consistency.

That has caused some huge concerns. When you talk to, as mentioned, Jamie Lim from the forest industry, big concerns are the species at risk. The number one aspect, from their perspective, is that it's going to shut down a lot of the forestry and what's happening in the forest industry in the province; but not only that, the recent caribou guidelines that have been established by individuals.

I'm receiving a flurry of emails from all across the province commenting on the EBR posting—that's the environmental bill registry, where it's closing on March 10—because of the impact on caribou.

For those who don't know how caribou is changing the forestry sector, quite frankly, caribou management

has a tendency for large tracts of huge clear-cutting areas. I'll be as quick and succinct as possible in the time I have remaining. Caribou management goes in. It can cut huge tracts because the food that caribou feed on requires extended periods of undisturbed land. So what'll happen, then, is they'll go in and do large cuts, and then leave the land for 60 to 80 years, because the lichens and mosses that they feed on take that long to grow—as opposed to moose management; the way it was done in the past was patchwork.

Caribou management does not support good, stable moose populations, where moose management is patchwork. You might say, in a 100-acre plot, to make it very easy, it would be that you might have 10 plots that would be cut and then 10 not cut, then patchwork through, and it promotes new growth and feed areas for many of the other animals in that area.

That's having a huge impact on the way that forestry is looking at how it's happening, and there are some concerns.

As I said, the key to the whole thing is that people need to realize that so long as the forest has value, it will continue to be a forest. When it loses its value, they'll find other resources to use it for.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Once again I had an opportunity to listen to my Conservative colleague, this time from Oshawa, and I want to thank him for some of the examples that he provided. I also want to thank him for pointing out that, unlike a government that thinks that it's all about tenure, there are many other issues, a great number of issues, that are bothering people across the north that this government has either fumbled the ball on or has failed to address, or has addressed them in ways which actually make matters worse. If this government thinks that this rather short bill on tenure is really going to address the problems that it has created in the forest sector across northern Ontario, well, I think this government is in for a very big surprise in about six months' time.

As my colleague from Timmins—James Bay pointed out earlier, people across the north are very angry. People who have worked hard all their lives, paid their taxes and contributed to the community are now out of work. Many of them have not only lost their jobs; they've lost their homes, they've lost their livelihoods and they've lost their families.

We saw on the weekend the northern growth plan released, which was basically a plan to continue talking. After eight years, people across northern Ontario reasonably expect more than this. They know that simply talking about tenure is not going to address the massive loss of jobs, the multi-million-dollar loss to communities; yet this is the best that this government has to offer. This is not going to work.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I appreciate the comments from my colleague across the floor, the member from

Oshawa. He raises quite a number of constructive issues, I believe. He talked about how we might go about structuring the local boards, and I think that he raises some substantial and interesting issues. The government hasn't landed on a particular solution to that and would welcome input from Ontarians on how those boards should be chosen. I would say to him, though, that we do value industry input on these boards, we value community input on these boards and we value concerned citizens who are interested to be on these boards.

I think, as we go forward with the two models we are intending to go forward with, it will be somewhat of a learning experience as we determine how these boards are to be structured. But I can assure the member that his input would be welcome. The input of communities, industry, First Nations and others will be welcomed so that we can structure these boards in a way that reflects the local situation, local employment, the local environment in the broad sense and other such issues that might arise as they manage the forest for the betterment of all Ontario.

I appreciate those constructive comments. In general, your side has a lot to contribute as we talk about these things, and I look forward to those being fleshed out as we go forward with this bill.

I think all of us would understand that this isn't going to fix the forest industry, but it is one part of it. We have to recognize that we need to move forward. Solutions of a generation ago will not be the solutions of tomorrow. We need to figure that out, we're trying very hard and we appreciate the input.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 151. I'd like to commend the member from Oshawa for taking us through that in 10 minutes. I learned quite a bit about forest management. Coming from southwestern Ontario, it's something we don't have a lot of experience at—in my riding, anyway—but I know we certainly benefit from the jobs, the construction work that's done and, of course, the timber that's generated from the north.

What I heard today from many speakers on all sides of the House was the necessity to consult and to work with the community leaders of all stripes in the north. It seems like, from what I'm hearing, a number of people seem to think and feel that there has been a lack of that consultation, and they want to make sure that the First Nations community and the people of the north who benefit from those jobs are certainly consulted.

I see that there are a number of concerns, from my visit here this afternoon, as I've been listening, with the new board that's going to govern this. Someone called it the LHIN of the north—the LFMC. I think the member from Haldimand–Norfolk called it the northern LHIN, a LHIN by another name.

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But I think our member from Oshawa certainly captured a lot of the opportunities that would be necessary to improve this bill. I know that our member from Oshawa

certainly would have something to bring to that discussion and I know he looks forward to working with the minister when it gets to committee, to make all those kinds of recommendations and move amendments that would make this bill better for the people of the north and for all of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments? Member from Pickering–Scarborough Southeast.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Close enough, Speaker: Pickering–Scarborough East. But it's okay.

It's always a pleasure to join briefly in the debate. It's really nice to be part of and sit and listen to what I can only call a civil debate this afternoon. It's enlightening for us.

I always appreciate hearing from the member from Oshawa, who always brings some reasoned debate and his expertise to bear when he has the floor. I didn't realize, though, that he was a lumberjack until the early part of the discussion; it was with Tyrone in the eastern part of Durham region, skidding and the rest of the descriptors. He comes to the debate with hands-on experience, one might say.

This is an important part, I think, of the overall strategies our government has used in the context of the forest industry. I recall the debates we've had over the last number of years now around the financing of the forest industry and support for them as the economy turned on them. As the member from Algoma–Manitoulin said, this is one piece. It's not the do-all and be-all. It's one piece of an ongoing process. The ongoing need for consultation with communities that are affected and with First Nation aboriginal communities is an important part of that in Ontario.

I can't claim, nor do I claim, any particular knowledge or expertise in the area, but standing here I can say that the nature of this discussion, the nature of the bill, the commitment to that kind of ongoing consultation and the understanding that rests here on all sides, as people have brought further debate, can only enhance what we're doing. When this goes to committee I think there will be additional opportunities to see that expertise come to bear on the committee debate before this bill will be brought here, presumably, for third reading.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Oshawa has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I very much appreciate the comments from the members from Kenora–Rainy River, Algoma–Manitoulin, Sarnia–Lambton and Pickering–Scarborough East.

I think the key about this is the unknown factor. I understand that the government is trying to move forward in making some changes and supporting an industry that, quite frankly, is the lifeblood of probably the largest land mass of the province of Ontario and the population that lives on that land mass. And how to move forward?

The reason I brought forward the comments regarding some of those aspects, whether it's board makeup or some of the other things, is that we just need to make

sure we get it right, because it is a lifeblood. Any time that we deal with those issues that, certainly, individuals are passionate about, we want to make sure we get it right. As I mentioned, Devon homes in Chapleau, or the cedar mills that used to be there, or Foleyet Timber products, or all the other individuals and organizations in the north, they're concerned about it because they care about it. It's something that, when people are looking to pay the bills, take care of the lifestyle that they live and try to enhance it as much as we can for future generations, we want to make sure that all things are right.

There are some concerns here, whether it's the reporting aspect or the penalties that potentially take place if it's not done in 120 days; the subsidiaries that are allowed to be established; the transfer of grants; and the impact on the free trade aspect of the entire legislation, but as I said, time and time again, so long as individuals realize—and I keep repeating this because I think it's important and if it sinks in, it will go a long way: So long as the forest has value, there will continue to be a forest.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to take part in this debate because there are many issues that I want to raise.

First of all, I think most people across Ontario would be shocked to know that most of Ontario's forest is not private land; it is public land or crown land. In fact, the vast majority of northern Ontario is land that is held by the crown. It's held by the public. As the law stands now, someone who locates a mill in Manitoba or in Minnesota or in Michigan or in Quebec cannot simply come into Ontario and access crown timber. If they can arrange some sort of reciprocal relationship with an Ontario operation, they can perhaps organize an exchange of wood fibre such that a mill in Ontario is receiving valuable wood fibre from a US jurisdiction and might trade wood from their sustainable forest licence in return.

One of the dangers of this bill, and I think the government needs to sit down and seriously think about it, is the fact that this bill, for the first time in history, will simply open up Ontario's crown forests to the highest bidder. All you have to do is look at section 5:

"The following are the objects of an Ontario local forest management corporation: ...

"(4) To market, sell and enable access to a predictable and competitively priced supply of crown forest resources."

I know that the minister and some of the officials have been going around saying, "No, no, this would just be selling and marketing and putting up for bid in Ontario." But the fact of the matter is, in Canada, we are subject to the World Trade Organization and NAFTA. If a mill located in Minnesota comes to my part of Ontario and says, "We want to put in a bid on these crown forest resources of Ontario," the government can't disallow that. You can't say, "You're not allowed to bid." If you try to say, "You're not allowed to bid," let me tell you, you will be up before a NAFTA panel or a World Trade panel before you can shake your head "no."

For the last 20 years, mills in the United States have been after—this is the real issue around softwood lumber—complete, full access to crown forests, whether they be in Ontario or elsewhere in Canada. They want to be able to bid. They want that wood fibre. Do they want that wood fibre in order to create jobs in Ontario? No. They want that wood fibre in order to access it here and ship it south of the border.

One of the big issues around Thunder Bay just a few years ago was that Abitibi held some private forest land. After they closed a number of their operations in Thunder Bay, they said, "We don't need this forest land anymore," and they put it up for bid. Lo and behold, who was the highest bidder but an American company, which now harvests the wood and ships it to a mill in Duluth, Minnesota—forest resources harvested in Ontario, not being used to sustain jobs in Ontario but being used to sustain jobs, good jobs, in and near Duluth, Minnesota.

In my part of Ontario, which is right along the Minnesota border, I bump into American wood buyers all the time. They're up talking to farmers and anybody else who has private wood, private land. Are they buying that wood to create a mill and create good jobs in Ontario? No. They want to buy that wood and take it across the border to sustain good jobs in their jurisdictions.

This government says it wants to promote economic development and jobs in Ontario. Well, let me tell you, from Thunder Bay through Fort Frances to Rainy River, what I can see happening is that all kinds of American mills, Minnesota-based mills, are coming up and saying, "We'll bid on this, we'll bid on this and we'll bid on this." Already having, say, 75% or 80% of their wood supply in Minnesota, they're probably quite willing to bid very high for that marginal 15%, the top 15%, because it's the added 10% or 15%. For them, it's not 50% or 70% of their wood supply; it's just that added 10% or 15%. They're probably willing to bid very high.

But what happens out of that process? You'll get a few jobs harvesting the wood, but the good jobs—the pipefitters, the electricians, the welders, the instrument mechanics, the computer technicians; the good jobs that pay good wages, a pension and a benefits package—will all be in Minnesota. So I ask myself: How could anyone say this is going to benefit people in my part of the province?

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Let me give you another example. The announcement of this government, the announcement a few weeks ago by Cliffs Natural Resources that they're very interested in mining the chromite in the Ring of Fire area north of Thunder Bay—they're very interested in mining the chromite, but they're not much interested in building a smelter in Ontario because Ontario's hydro prices are too high—again shook things up. I read the release; I asked a few questions. It would cost them, they figure, in the range of \$6 million a year in hydro costs to run a smelter in Ontario; it would cost them about \$3 million in Quebec—sorry, that's \$6 million a month; about \$3 million a month in Quebec and about \$2 million a month in Manitoba. That's the difference in hydro rates.

Somebody with a sharp pencil in my part of the province, right up against the Manitoba border, I could see them saying, "You know what? We're going to build a new state-of-the-art sawmill right here, just inside the Manitoba border where the hydro rates are a lot lower"—and you know what else is a lot lower? For somebody who has a truck and a trailer and is interested in trucking logs, the insurance rates under a public insurance system in Manitoba are less than half what they are in Ontario. I could see somebody with a sharp pencil saying, "I'm going to set up a very modern sawmill right here," or "I'm going set up a very modern plant to maybe use trees, wood fibre for chemical production, but I'm going to set it up in Manitoba because the hydro costs are going to make it a lot less, and I'll just bid on that Ontario wood and bring it over." Once again, we get a few harvesting jobs but the really good jobs, the electrician, the welder, the pipefitter, the millwright, the machinist, the instrument mechanic, the computer technician, will be in another jurisdiction.

My colleague Mr. Bisson already sees this happening along the Quebec border; his riding is Timmins-James Bay. Quebec, because of some of the forest policy decisions they made in the past, does not have a lot of sawlogs. Yes, they have a lot of young wood fibre that can be used in pulp mills and paper mills, but the kind of really mature timber that you want for a sawmill to get the best sawlog utilization, they don't have. They've got a lot of sawmills right up against the Ontario border that really have difficulty accessing the wood.

What do the McGuinty Liberals want to do? They want to make it easier for those Quebec sawmills now to come over to Cochrane, Timiskaming, Kapuskasing, Smooth Rock Falls, Iroquois Falls and North Bay, bid on the wood and take it to Quebec. I'm asking, how does that aid, how does that help all of those people who used to work in sawmills and board mills and pulp mills in places like Smooth Rock Falls, Opasatika, Kirkland Lake, Temagami, North Bay and Mattawa? How does that help them? They'll see natural resources that are in their own backyard now harvested and taken to Quebec to supply good jobs in Quebec.

I've had this discussion with some of the forest companies in my own riding, because what they see is mills that used to be operating in my part of Ontario. I'll give you an example. The paper mill that produced white paper, the kind of paper that you use in your photocopier or your computer—the white paper mill in Dryden was the most modern paper mill complex in Canada. It had had something like \$5.5 billion of new investment in the last 15 years. But today, the two paper machines are shut down, the sawmill is shut down, where 1,100 people used to work there are now 300 people working. But directly across the border from me in International Falls, Minnesota, the paper mill that competed directly with Dryden is still running. It produces the same kind of paper—white paper. The paper machines are running; it sustains over 500 jobs. Now, if I'm the white paper mill in International Falls that's still running and I want to

access good wood fibre, under this scheme, as presented by the McGuinty Liberals, I know where I'd be going. I'd be going across the border, and I'd be putting in bids.

Similarly, there was a beautiful mill in Thunder Bay, Cascades, that produced coated paper, the kind of shiny, coated paper that if you ever go into a car dealership you'll see—pictures of the cars and there's nice, glossy paper. That paper was produced at the Cascades mill. The Cascades mill is now closed; over 500 jobs gone. But the directly competing mill, which is in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, an hour and a half south of where I live, is still operating, still making that coated paper. So if you go into a car dealership and you see those nice, glossy pictures of cars—it's still operating. They need wood fibre. I know what I'd do. I'd be up in Thunder Bay, I'd be in Fort Frances, I'd be in Atikokan bidding on wood fibre. And if I thought for an instant that I wasn't getting it because somehow some strings had been pulled, right away I'd be before a WTO panel or a NAFTA panel.

Similarly, there used to be a packaging mill in Red Rock. Two machines produced, basically, the kind of paper that would go into making paper bags or cardboard boxes. The mill is gone; 300 jobs are gone, the two paper machines shut down. A similar mill in Thunder Bay, Smurfit-Stone, used to produce packaging-grade paper. It's the brown, heavy paper, again, that you'd see in cardboard boxes or paper bags. Both those mills are gone. But if you go just two and a half hours south of Thunder Bay to Duluth, Minnesota, and Cloquet, Minnesota, you'll find paper machines making packaging material, packaging paper.

If I'm those mills and I read this tenure legislation by the McGuinty Liberals and I need wood fibre, I know what I'd be doing. I'd be saying, "Let's get on up there to Thunder Bay. We've got a whole bunch of mills that are shut down. Let's bid on what was their wood supply. Again, because we're only worried here about our marginal top 10% or 15%, we can afford to bid very high," and I get the wood. But the good jobs aren't going to happen in Thunder Bay. The good jobs are going to be sustained in Duluth, Minnesota, and Cloquet, Minnesota.

I hear the McGuinty Liberals trying to promote this as somehow being some wonderful thing for the forest industry. On the one hand, I can see all the damage it's going to do. I can see the downsides but, like my colleague from Timmins-James Bay, I'm looking for an upside.

We just had the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry announce over the last month or so some new allocations of wood fibre in some places in northern Ontario. I hear the parliamentary assistant say the government needs this legislation to enable reallocation to take place. The minister had no trouble re-allocating timber supplies; he had no trouble allocating wood fibre—none—under the existing legislation.

I'm struggling to find the positive benefit of this legislation when it's pretty clear there are some pretty negative connotations. Let me tell you, people in Thunder Bay and Sudbury were outraged when they read the

Cliffs Natural Resources press release in the papers in those communities. They were outraged when they heard that, as a result of what this government has done, a valuable mineral resource, possibly the largest chromite deposit in the world, would be mined in Ontario, but it would be shipped outside the province for all processing. They were outraged. Let me tell you, I think when they have a chance to go through this bill and understand that this legislation would result in the same sort of thing happening to our wood fibre, people will be outraged again.

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The bigger problem is this: Under the NAFTA agreements and the WTO agreements, once you open a natural resource like this to market bidding—and it doesn't matter if it's wood fibre you're talking about or water—whoever bids the highest gets the resource. You cannot turn it off. You cannot go back and pass legislation, saying, "Whoops, we made a mistake. Whoops, this wasn't such a good idea. Whoops, it looks like we're exporting thousands of good jobs to other jurisdictions." The WTO and NAFTA agreements do not allow you to retract. Once you've opened it up, once you've said this is no longer a publicly administered resource but a resource that is up to the highest bidder, you cannot turn off the tap. Since I haven't heard a convincing case from the government for why some of these things need to be put in legislation, why the legislation needs to be changed, I think the government should go back to the drawing board and consider very carefully what it's doing here.

When I talk to people in the forest sector across the north, they say their number one problem for the last almost 10 years has been the price of electricity—and it's not just them saying that. They came to this government in 2004—I was in the hearings—and said, "Look, we can see there's going to be a lot of consolidation in the pulp and paper industry. The worst thing you can do is substantially increase our hydro rates, because that's one of our major cost factors. If you increase hydro rates, you're going to make us much less competitive. When it comes time to consolidate production, our corporate offices, whether they're in the southern US or Montreal, are going to look at Ontario and say, 'Oh, costs are going up.'" Mills in other jurisdictions went to their governments and said the same thing. In the United States, they actually found ways to reduce energy costs for the pulp and paper industry.

So, what has been the result? Well, between Sault Ste. Marie and the Manitoba border eight years ago, we had 21 operating paper machines in northern Ontario. Today we have four operating paper machines in northern Ontario. The rest are gone. You'll find production consolidated in Quebec. You'll find production consolidated in the southern United States. You'll find production consolidated in Minnesota. You'll find fewer and fewer operating paper machines in Ontario.

We used to have 15 operating sawmills in northern Ontario. Today we've got two, from Sault Ste. Marie to the Manitoba border, that are operating. The rest are shut

down. There's no secret. They'll tell you, "If we don't have a paper mill to sell our residual chips to, we can't operate."

Let me tell you, this government's tenure fix is not going to address any of that. It's not going to help the people from the Ear Falls sawmill who were laid off, the people from the Atikokan sawmill who were laid off, the people from the Sioux Lookout sawmill who were laid off, the people from the Kenora sawmill, the people from the Nakina sawmill. It's not going to help the Dubreuilville sawmill. It's not going to help the White River sawmill. It's not going to help the three sawmills in Thunder Bay that are shut down. This legislation is not going to do a thing about that. But I do think we put at risk having Ontario resources go to other jurisdictions.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I'm always interested in the comments of the member from Kenora—Rainy River. He knows full well that the bill does not change the provisions that are in place that say you cannot ship timber out of the province to other places. Chicken Little over there, the one-trick pony, has harped on the same issue for a long time. He needs to broaden his horizons.

First of all, the Crown Forest Sustainability Act is in place and will continue to be in place, which says you cannot export timber unless there is no market for that timber in the province of Ontario. That's the rule today; it will be the rule tomorrow. It is in place. That's—

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Answer the question: What are you going to do when a US mill bids on the wood?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** If you are positioning yourself in terms of rhetoric—the member for Kenora—Rainy River loves to do that. The fact of the matter is, the world will not change as far as the exports go. As a matter of fact—he probably doesn't realize this—roughly 5% of the timber used in this province today comes from other jurisdictions. It comes from Manitoba, it comes from Minnesota, it comes from Wisconsin, and it comes from Quebec. There is some trade across our borders, and there always has been.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** On an exchange basis.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** Yeah, he says on exchange; that's true. There's nothing that's going to change that. A market price within Ontario, to Ontario users, doesn't change anything. He knows that. He should stop flogging this pony.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a pleasure to listen to the member from Kenora—Rainy River, who served as minister and author of the current legislation that's being amended.

I would say that the most informative part of what he said is, how is it today? It has gone from, as he said, 15 operating mills to two. We could blame it all on Premier McGuinty; I only blame part of it on him. The price of

the dollar really isn't all—it's mostly federal and, in fact, global.

I think the price of energy and other regulatory attempts in the industry are good examples that not working with them in—this bill is another part of destabilizing, as our critic has said, and has created uncertainties in the industry.

I look at the informative magazine here, the Working Forest, the most recent issue of it, the 2011 issue. I'll just read the article. It says, "Mixed Reaction to Ontario's Tenure Reform Plans." It goes on to say that this "tenure reform provided little relief to the management of Greenmantle Forest in Thunder Bay....

"We were very concerned about a revolutionary approach being taken as opposed to an evolutionary approach.... They were originally talking about having five to 15 forest management units versus the 43" now.

I think, if you're looking at it—there are other reports that I'll put on the record when I'm privileged to be able to speak on this thing.

There are plans, working today in collaboration with other partners in the industry, that are working. It appears to me that the government has come in with a forced plan, if you will, that may or may not work. All I can tell you is they better do something because this is a very important sector to not just northern Ontario but all of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It sure was a pleasure to listen to the member from Kenora–Rainy River. I enjoy him just about as much as I enjoy speaking with his wife, who used to be the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Let's put this into perspective: We've had tens of thousands of layoffs in the forestry sector industry in northern Ontario. We've had close to 60 mills that have closed. I can speak at length about Fryer Forest Products, on the edge of my riding, which is still hanging in there by very little; I would say by the skin of their teeth.

Here we have an industry that is crying out for help, and everybody in the north draws the comparison that when the auto industry came to the government and asked for help, the government acted swiftly and they acted decisively. When the forestry industry goes to the government for help, it is now years down the road, and there is still no concrete help forthcoming.

I still have dozens of forestry workers who come to my office to see me and say, "We need help. We know that there will be better times. How come the government is not listening to us?"

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Now we have this tenure reform plan that is coming forward that is not going to bring any certainty to the sector, that is not going to help the mills that have made it through this recession—which doesn't know when to end—that are still working and would like the ear of the government so that they can stay in business. But we're

not doing this. We're bringing more uncertainty into a sector that doesn't need it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'm delighted to speak to this piece of legislation, the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, and to respond to the member from Kenora–Rainy River, who was, in fact, the voice of doom and gloom today, as he is normally. You know it's a bad day when the member for Durham is actually seen as optimistic and almost positive.

I'm delighted to be able to stand up and speak a little positively about the future of the north and to speak about the changes that we are making to forest tenure.

We heard loudly and clearly from Ontarians that they wanted to see change. We understand that the forestry sector is in crisis; it has been for a number of years. We've provided millions of dollars of support to the forestry sector over the years. We've assisted them in co-generation. We've assisted them with energy prices. We've assisted them in the transition to a new model, which will provide them with a basis in which to compete globally.

We are also acknowledging that there are new players on the block, which I'm sure the member for Kenora–Rainy River is unaware of. In my neck of the woods, in my part of northern Ontario, we have a number of new players who want to become involved in the forestry management sector, who want to come up with new products, who are looking for some wood in order to participate in different, new, alternative energy sources.

We have Tembec in my area of the province, which is actually located in Témiscaming—which, for the benefit of the member from Kenora–Rainy River, is actually in Quebec, but a lot of the people at Tembec live in North Bay, et on est très content de les avoir chez nous, vivre chez nous, faire leur shopping chez nous. Ils sont vraiment une partie de notre communauté. Tembec is looking at how to modernize and become part of the new forestry industry.

We have some great new initiatives in Mattawa, which is very much a forestry town, looking at how they can reconfigure the Tembec equipment that was left behind, that was closed, and how they can start up a new operation. For that, they need forest tenure reform, and that's what we're talking about today: giving these people a chance.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Kenora–Rainy River has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to thank everyone for their contributions, but I will start by asking the question that I asked initially, and that's a question that has been asked by my colleague from Timmins–James Bay as well. The Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, when he set out earlier last year to reallocate forest licences and forest resources, was asked the question, "Do you need new legislation to do this?" His response was, "No. The Crown Forest Sustainability Act

allows us to do this, and the reallocations will be made under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.”

We’ve heard from speaker after speaker the concern of the industry that is struggling to survive, their real issues about the uncertainty that this legislation will create, particularly the section which allows the minister, with no rationale or reason whatsoever, simply to strike out somebody’s forest licence.

I’ve tried to get across the point that we are bound by the NAFTA and world trade agreements, and that once you put wood up for bid, you cannot say, “Oh, you in Minnesota can’t bid on this,” or “You in Wisconsin can’t bid on this,” or “You in Michigan can’t bid on this.” Once you put a natural resource up for bid, you cannot then exclude someone simply because their operation is based in another national jurisdiction. If you try to do that, you’ll be before a NAFTA panel or a World Trade panel quicker than you can shake your head. For the government to put their head in the sand and ignore that is going to put even more jobs in northern Ontario at risk—many more jobs.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I’m pleased to have an opportunity this afternoon to speak to this piece of forest tenure legislation, Bill 151. I apologize; I came in from Thunder Bay today and I have not heard much, if any, of what has been said up to this point regarding the debate on this piece of legislation. I wish I had been here earlier. It is, of course, a piece of legislation that is key and central to all of northern Ontario. As most people recognize, the impact of the forest industry also has a significant impact on the economies of areas beyond the jurisdictions of just northern Ontario.

I think I can probably assume, even though I have not heard much of the debate earlier, that there are at least some common denominators from, I would suspect, all three parties when it comes to issues related to forestry. That is that what we have seen over the course of the last 10 years, I would say—and this transformation began long before we formed government. But I am sure, whether it’s a Conservative, an NDP or a Liberal speaking, that most people would likely agree that what has occurred in this industry is probably fair to be characterized as having been a very fundamental change.

The forest industry in northern Ontario was not unused to seeing cyclical changes in the industry from decade to decade. That was normal. It’s not like it happened every couple of years, but it wasn’t unusual every 10 years or so to see changes in the fortunes of the forest industry. The people somewhat got used to that. Some mills would prosper and others wouldn’t do so well, but it was almost to be expected. I think that was part of the problem: that we’d always come out of these cycles and that things would be as they were before and that they would continue on in the way they had in the past.

I’ve lived in Thunder Bay almost my entire life, and I can tell you that that has pretty much been the history. I think, to some degree, all of us—and this predates our

government. The NDP were in power from 1990 to 1995 and the Conservatives from 1995 to 2003. We’ve now had the pleasure for the last seven years. You could say that we’ve all had some responsibility for managing or mismanaging the industry. I think we all somehow felt that, no matter what, the industry would always come back, that it would always stay the same. We’d cycle through another evolution of cyclical economic factors, many of them beyond our control, and at the end of it, we’d come out and there would still be this many small sawmills scattered all across northern Ontario and there would always be a certain number of pulp and paper mills scattered across northern Ontario.

We’ve learned this time that that’s not the case. What occurred this time was not cyclical change; it was extremely fundamental in terms of the change that has occurred in the forest industry. While I’m not a historian on the forest industry, I might argue that it’s probably the first time that change of this magnitude has occurred in this industry. What is it that we’re going to do about that?

For seven years, I’ve listened primarily, I will say, to the New Democratic Party blame the Liberal government. For every sawmill closure and every pulp and paper mill closure in northern Ontario, it was the fault of the Liberal government. That’s what the NDP have said for seven years. I’ve said to some of the other northern members that we didn’t do a good enough job of speaking out against the ridiculousness of that argument. We let them repeat the same thing over and over again, and I think there were a significant number of people in northern Ontario who bought in and believed it. They tied it primarily to the cost of power. They would suggest to everybody who had a job in a sawmill or a pulp and paper mill that closed—sometimes permanently—that the reason that happened was because the Liberal government in the province of Ontario wasn’t doing a good enough job when it came to controlling power rates. That’s what the NDP did. In fact, I need to give the Conservatives some credit because they didn’t buy into that line of ridiculousness at the beginning. But I would say—

**Mr. John O’Toole:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I ask the member to repeat that statement.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It’s not a point of order.

The member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** He might not want me to repeat when I finish the comment. But I would say that lately the Conservatives seem to be, as the election date nears, starting to trot out that old familiar NDP line a little bit more.

I wanted to talk just a bit about the electricity piece of this. You have to divide the forest industry into at least two pieces: the pulp and paper side and the sawmilling side. The suggestion by, again, primarily the NDP that somehow electricity rates had anything to do with the demise of the sawmilling half of the forestry industry is incredible.

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Electricity is not a significant input cost when it comes to sawmills in northern Ontario or, without knowing for sure, I could probably say, almost any other jurisdiction in Canada. It just is not. So out of tens of thousands of jobs that the NDP like to talk about being lost in the forest industry, a lot of those jobs were in the sawmilling industry. I can tell you unequivocally that the connection between electricity pricing and sawmill jobs is simply misplaced; it's absurd; it's unfair.

I've said in this Legislature before that when NDP members would stand in their place and tell people back in Thunder Bay, Atikokan and all across northern Ontario that, "If we just fix those energy prices, don't worry, you'll get your job back," people were making life decisions: Do I need to move? Do I need to go back to school? Do I need to get retrained? They were really doing a disservice to all of those people, because what had occurred in this industry was a fundamental shift that could not be fixed by simply lowering the cost of energy by one megawatt or whatever the price may be. It was an absurd argument to make, but they continued to make it, and people bought into it. They might have decided, "I'm going to stay in my home," or "I'm not going to try to get a job in the oil patch," or "I'm not going to go back to school and get retrained in the Second Career program" put forward by our government.

It was a terrible thing to do. You did a disservice to people who were caught up in this economic storm, this perfect storm that affected the forest industry, as it was described. You were doing those people a disservice, because they needed to make life choices. They had a very hard decision to make.

Many of those people are my friends that I went through school with. I know the demographic very well. Many of them had a grade 10, a grade 12 education. They were 25-, 30-year employees of these particular industries and mills. They had a tough choice to make, and the suggestion was made, "Don't worry; all we have to do is lower the cost of electricity." It was a nonsensical argument to make, but some people believed it.

You know what? There's no market for the products that sawmills produce. There are still some sawmills operating, and I think, in my personal opinion, when we come out of it, there are always going to be sawmills; there are always going to be pulp and paper mills. There are still some sawmills operating but they are going to be bigger. From this point forward, they're going to have to be bigger in order to compete. That's my belief.

The fact of the matter is, when it comes to the products that they produce, the market was greatly diminished, almost to the point of being wiped out. The Buchanan sawmills in my neck of the woods that employed thousands of people for a very long time, for decades: 90% to 95% of his product was exported into the American market—90% to 95% of it. Guess what's gone on in the American market for the last seven to 10 years? There's this thing called the greatest recession since the Great Depression. There is this thing called the sub-prime mortgage problem, where this incredible glut

of houses appeared on the American market and you could go down there and buy a \$400,000 house for \$50,000. And so, guess what that meant to the housing market? Nobody's building houses. Ipso facto, Buchanan sawmills, 95% of his product that went into the US, doesn't have a customer anymore.

But the NDP would tell those workers, "Don't go back to school; don't get retrained; don't go get a job in another jurisdiction, because we're just going to fix this with the cost of electricity." What a bunch of nonsense, and we had to listen to it.

It wasn't just the recession or the sub-prime mortgage crisis; there's a thing called the debt crisis going on, right?

AbitibiBowater, in my community, joined—they used to be just Bowater, the pulp and paper mill. They joined with Abitibi. At the time, it probably sounded like a good idea: "We're going to join. We're into the newsprint market. We're in the pulp market. We're going to join. We want to take some commodity out of the market and try to get the price up."

It sounded like a good idea at the time. Well, a year later, the credit crisis hits. What did Abitibi have on their books? They had \$6.2 billion of debt after they joined forces, and now we've got a credit crisis in the US. What happens?

It is amazing. I always appreciate very much—I've said it before. Sometimes I'm envious of the positions of the Conservatives or the positions of the NDP. Sometimes, I must say, I'm envious of the simplicity of your arguments. You just throw out energy pricing. You trot out, as it was described here a little while ago, this one-trick-pony argument and you repeat it and repeat it. You beat it into people's brains until they don't think there's anything else going on. But you know what? This is fundamental change, and it doesn't work that way.

This industry requires a different approach today. If you're truly interested in helping those people who have lost their jobs in this industry, you might want to think a bit broader and you might want to try and change the message because lowering the cost of electricity by one cent a kilowatt hour or whatever it is your goal would be—and I never did hear what it was—is not going to bring one job back in the sawmilling industry because there is no market for what they produce. That market has been severely diminished. There are still sawmills operating. There's some market.

If you want to do something, why don't you go and ask the federal guys to try and do some work on the softwood lumber agreement? Get us a bigger market share. Try and find a way to address that tribunal. Every time we try and export into that market, we get shut down. It's unbelievable, the simplicity of their argument. I must say I'm envious.

The reality of it is, we've helped tremendously when it comes to this industry. There are more mills that may have been gone, that may have disappeared if not for the different types of support that we brought forward, I would say, over the last five years, even more significantly, the last two or three years.

In the last two years, for AbiBo operating in the city of Thunder Bay, employing 450 people and another 300 or 400 in the woodlands, we've announced two programs that, combined, are saving them \$25 million a year, and we think as a result of that we're going to see further investments come from that particular facility.

But when it comes to AbiBo, I should make the point, because again it's primarily the NDP who want to make it sound like we shut down an industry, that there were three paper machines operating at the AbiBo mill in 2003. Today, there is one. One of those machines closed in 2003. Here's a point that I want to stress, and I hope that people following this debate on TV will really remember this point. In 2003, they closed that machine. I think there were about 150 men and women associated with the work on that machine.

But here's the difference. When they closed that machine in 2003, before we formed government, they didn't just close the machine, they transferred the capacity of that machine—that is, what it produced, what it made, what it sold—to another jurisdiction. Okay? So they made a decision before we were in government, "You 150 people, you're out of work." The AbiBo mill in Thunder Bay has nothing to do with energy prices. This is 2003. Nothing to do with it. "We're shifting the capacity of that machine to a different jurisdiction."

I would love to hear an NDPer stand up and tell me why that happened, because you know what the point is? All of those closures that have occurred now that the NDP want to tell you are because of energy pricing—show me, if that's the case, where the capacity of those closures has been transferred to another jurisdiction. If it's only about energy prices, show me where the capacity of those sawmills and those pulp and paper mills got transferred to a lower-cost energy jurisdiction. Prove your argument instead of just standing up and being demagogues on a regular basis. Because you know what? It didn't happen.

Quebec is a lower-cost energy-producing jurisdiction than Ontario, and it always has been. BC is a lower-cost energy jurisdiction than Ontario, and it always has been. So if the case is simply about energy, how come they didn't just close? AbiBo operates mills in Quebec. Why didn't they just close the mill in Thunder Bay and transfer the capacity into Quebec? Because there's no market. Right? Because the commodity price was too low. Because the Canadian dollar used to be 73 cents and it topped out at \$1.10. Because there's a shrinking market for newsprint. Because there's global competition. I wonder if there's a little bit more at play here, when it comes to forestry and the fundamental change that has occurred in this industry. As I say, I continue to be envious of the simplicity of the arguments that the NDP and, unfortunately, lately, my Conservative friends get to put out there.

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So, what are we going to do about it? I can tell you that where I come from, people have been clamouring for change, in terms of the management of the forest industry. We've been hearing this for three or four years.

There are quieter voices out there who understand the fundamental change that has occurred in this industry, and they know that we need a different approach to try to create jobs.

About one or two months ago, I had the opportunity to be in Atikokan—my riding is Thunder Bay—Atikokan—for a wonderful announcement. We had a competitive wood supply allocation announcement. We gave a company called Atikokan Renewable Fuels, through a competitive process—we didn't just give it to them; they had to bid. And there was significant aboriginal involvement in their bid. We allocated to them—I'm forgetting the number—about 180,000 cubic metres. They already had 100,000. They're going to go into a different type of market, which is where we need to be if we want to create jobs. They're going to take an old sawmill—again, another example of an old sawmill that was closed in Atikokan when I was first elected—called Proboard. It was closed already. We didn't create this problem. This company has bought that facility. They're going to bring about 95 people back to work—40 or 60 of them in the facility and the balance in the woodlands—producing wood pellets, because we gave them wood. It's a new approach in this situation to getting wood to new players who have new products; who want to create employment with significant First Nations involvement—which is one of the reasons they won the bid. This company is now going to have an opportunity to bid on being the supplier of a biomass fuel source to the Atikokan generating station.

All three parties and all three political leaders—Howard Hampton, when he was the leader of the NDP; Ernie Eves, when he was the leader of the Conservatives; and us—when we were running in 2003, committed to closing coal, but nobody committed to converting them. Well, we've done that. Atikokan generating station is going to be converted to biomass. This particular company that just got this wood through a new process—we're talking about change, to address the fundamental change that has occurred in this industry. This new company now has wood. They're going to produce a biomass product that could potentially, through a competitive process, have them become the supplier of their product to that facility. How many more jobs will that create is the point that I'm getting to. That's Atikokan Renewable Fuels.

I've talked about AbitibiBowater in Thunder Bay on the sawmilling side. On the pulp and paper side, if you have thermo-mechanical pulping, it is an energy-intensive process. Not all pulp and paper mills have the same process. If you have what is called TMP, it can be a significant contributor to their operating costs. We addressed this. Anybody who still stands in this place, looks into the cameras on a regular basis and tells all of those thousands of laid-off forestry workers, "You know what? Your job is gone because this Liberal government just dropped the ball when it came to the policy"—it's staggering to me. I've got to tell you, the nerve is absolutely staggering. My old friend Johnny Holbik, the Kashabowie Kid, used to say, "Billy, they've got more

nerve than a bad tooth.” I don’t know how people do it. They say it on a regular basis. They repeat it. I guess it’s the old advertising axiom, right? Just keep saying it—10 times before it penetrates into the consciousness of your market. I suppose that’s what’s going on here. It’s not something I could do.

This bill, Bill 151, is about change. People in northern Ontario have been asking for this for a very long time and we’re delivering it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O’Toole:** For a moment there, I was quite happy to listen to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan and he was quite complimentary.

I was reading an article, oddly enough, in *Working Forest*, which referred directly to the wood supply winner and loser that he talked about. The company that he referred to was Atikokan Renewable Fuels. That announcement was, it says here, made on January 31. It’s going to be creating wood pellets, and those wood pellets are all glued together with glue. It’ll be replacing coal in biomass production, which I think is quite a unique idea, really.

I’d have to say that it would be wrong to assume that innovation, which was probably started by the company—as they call it, more nerve than a bad tooth. I think what he meant there is that these are the innovators that need to be rewarded.

I believe in the north. We should be, as Conservatives, proud to be partners with the members of the north, and I’ll tell you why. Self-reliance is a fundamental part of how we approach problem solving. Premier McGuinty’s approach is to write the cheque. He’s always got his hand in your pocket to solve every problem.

I look at the member from Oakville. It’s energy-related, Madam Speaker. They bailed out the plant, they cancelled the gas-fired plant in Oakville and moved it quickly to, I believe, Cambridge.

Now, what I’m saying here is how this applies. The north is self-reliant and that’s good, and I recognize that the government was at least intelligent enough to go there and recognize it. I’m not sure how much money was put in it. Perhaps in the follow-up—we recognize these partnerships. The commercialization of ideas is the future and the north just needs that kind of support.

This bill really is kind of a construct that is not going to allow that kind of innovation. These forest management plans and these new LHINs aren’t exactly what’s needed up there.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Where I come from, we say more nerve than a toothache, just so the member knows. We don’t use quite the same term, but I think I got your drift.

Yes, the NDP has been talking about the cost of energy because everywhere we go we hear it. The north produces the cheapest, greenest, easiest-to-get-to energy. We get it from falling water. Yet, we are not able to use it to provide jobs, growth and opportunity in the north and

we will keep talking about the cost of energy in the north because we hear it from every single paper mill, every single smelter, mining, forestry, tourism. People who live in our riding talk to us about the cost of energy. How could it be that we are able to produce energy in the north but we are not allowed to use it? Yes, we will keep making that argument over and over.

The member can say whatever he wants but it is under his watch that 60 forestry mills closed in northern Ontario, throwing tens of thousands of families out of a job. When the same thing happened in southern Ontario and the auto industry came to the McGuinty government, they acted. They listened and they helped out. When the forestry industry collapsed in the north, it didn’t matter how loud we shouted, nobody at Queen’s Park listened, nobody at Queen’s Park heard us. We were in northern Ontario and nobody cared. It didn’t matter that 200 jobs were lost at the paper mill in Espanola; it didn’t matter that 60 jobs were lost at the sawmill in Monctonville; it didn’t matter that 200 jobs were lost in Gogama. That was in the north. Nobody cared. Well, I care about people in northern Ontario and I will keep advocating for energy prices that make sense to—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I want to commend my colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan for not only a thoughtful speech, not only a factual speech, but an impassioned speech that spoke to the reality of northern Ontario, not the fabrications that we sometimes hear about the problem and the issues.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would ask the member to withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I withdraw “fabrications.”

The reality is, I represent a forest industry riding. I represent Domtar, which has a competitive mill producing more products, not less—it’s making a profit these days—that has always struggled through. I’ve worked with that particular mill since 1987, and it is a success story. It is true there are less employees there. It is true there are less employees in total at Tembec. It is true that there are less employees at Haavalsrud in Hornepayne. But they are all producing more.

The world has changed. Competition and change are a fact of the 21st century, a fact we may not like but a fact that is true. Northerners know that we need to change. Northerners have always known that we need to innovate. Northerners have always known that our economy relies on us.

The government has provided huge assistance. Talk to the Haavalsrud family in Hornepayne. Talk to the people at Tembec in Chapleau. Talk to the people at Domtar. Talk to those people who provide the jobs. You will find that they like this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the members from Algoma-Manitoulin, Durham and Nickel Belt.

People say the same thing. They repeat the same message. I would say to my friend from Nickel Belt that other people care; not just you, not just the NDP. This idea that you're the conscience of the province has worn a little thin. You're the only people who care, just the NDP—unbelievable. As I told you in my remarks, these are people I went through school with. I coached their kids in hockey. The ability for people to stand in their place and make comments like that and yet not offer a solution—tell me how you're going to fix the Canadian dollar.

The AbiBo mill in Thunder Bay: A one-cent appreciation in the value of the Canadian dollar equates to \$3 million to \$4 million of expense. When we came to government, it was 73 cents. It topped out at \$1.10. That's \$100 million a year, give or take, on their bottom line on an annual basis, just on the currency appreciation. Fix that for me. Create a market for the sawmills. Fix that. I don't know how you're going to do it.

There are real, fundamental issues. This is so fundamental, the change that has occurred. The responses that we are trying to bring forward—and I referenced the wood allocation process in my opening 20 minutes—are already creating jobs. Besides the one that I mentioned, the 95 through Atikokan Renewable Fuels, Abitibi-Bowater also has a sawmill. There are 50 brand new incremental jobs coming there. My colleague from Thunder Bay-Superior North and I had another event about a week ago where three different smaller players received wood allocations for the first time in their 20- or 30-year existence—long-term supply creating more jobs. It's starting to work already.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It being just after six o'clock, I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
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Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Fonseca, Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
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Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
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Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
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McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
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Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
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Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	
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Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
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Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
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<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
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<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga-Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
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Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown  
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips  
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
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No. 91

N° 91

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 8 March 2011**

**Mardi 8 mars 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 8 March 2011

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 8 mars 2011

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT DES COLLECTIVITÉS FORTES GRÂCE AU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 3, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2011, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 140, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement, abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la réforme du logement social et apportant des modifications corrélatives et autres à d'autres lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I'll just get my tie on, Mr. Speaker.

Just about the long-term affordable housing strategy, one of the things that most of us understand has become very apparent in recent years is that when we talk about housing, and especially the affordable housing strategy, it's not just the buildings and it's not just the mechanical, the heating, the air conditioning and, in some cases, the maintenance and repairs that are critically important. Many of our affordable housing units and buildings that are in our ridings—there have to be supportive services in there. That's what we forget.

People, more and more from all walks of life—rich, poor, young and old—need support. In many cases, it's people who suffer from perhaps learning disabilities or people who suffer from mental illness. In many cases, these are people who have these hidden disabilities, that is, people who cannot cope on their own. We can build the houses but, along with the housing, what is required are the supports in place to ensure that people are eating properly, that they're not dealing with all kinds of incredible stress in their lives—medical issues.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Bedbugs.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** In fact, I know the member from Peterborough mentioned the issue of bedbug infestation, which is a really debilitating issue that has affected a lot of people who, through no fault of their own, have had these issues.

This is part of the incredible investment that we make in housing and that people sometimes don't understand. You can't just have the buildings; you have to also have—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I listened carefully some time ago to the member from Beaches–East York. Actually, that'll be on the record.

But in my own view of this important social topic, I looked into some information from various advocacy groups. What I've come up with here is this: "Ontario's Proposed Affordable Housing Plan Fails to Meet Five Basic Tests Set by Housing Network of Ontario." The article goes on to say, "The Ontario government released its much anticipated long-term affordable housing strategy today, but the document failed to provide a plan that meets all five basic tests as set out by the Housing Network of Ontario and its almost 500 supporters across the province."

It goes on to say, "The Ontario government has proposed some new legislation and administrative procedures that are useful and important, but the essential items for a long-term affordable housing plan—targets, timeline and most of all funding over a multi-year period—are missing." So this is much ado about nothing.

This is what I find so disheartening: When you look at vulnerable people and housing and how important it is to re-establishing an individual and, indeed, a family in our society, there's not one nickel in here. It's very much like the retirement home thing. They're going to regulate retirement homes. That's their plan to replace long-term-care homes, but there's not one nickel in it for people who need the support from the province of Ontario. I am so disappointed.

I don't know what happened to Premier McGuinty, but somehow or other, he seems to have lost the heart and soul that he once had, and it's in this very file here, where they promised years ago to have an affordable plan. Something happened here. He's not paying attention or he doesn't care—one of those things.

But all I can say is that Bill 140, by all reports, fails to meet five basic tests, as said by the Housing Network of Ontario—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions? The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** Someday, I hope that will be Chatham–Kent–Leamington, but we'll wait for that.

I'll make a few comments here. Of course, the long-term affordable housing strategy that we're discussing is the first of its kind in Ontario. I've heard many speakers mention that this is really all about people, and truly, it is. That's what we're talking about, people's lives. What everyone aspires to in life is a home. There are other things that people do aspire to beyond that, but certainly, I've met people who come to me and say they want to have a home at some point in their lives. That's what this is about.

If passed, this proposed legislation will give Ontarians access to a system that does put people first. It will also set a strong foundation for a more efficient, accessible system for those who need it. That's what we're looking for and need: efficiency in this matter.

This bill is built upon the more than \$2.5 billion that our government has invested in non-profit housing since 2003—so this is just a continuation of the work that our government is doing and has done—and the more than \$430 million we provide in housing and homelessness supports annually. This is an ongoing part of our strategy.

I think it's important for people to understand that, if passed, this will give municipalities the flexibility that they have requested so that they can better allocate resources to meet local needs. That's very important, because we all understand that the needs of the GTA may not be the same as those in the southwest of Ontario or northern Ontario and all points in between. That flexibility is something that municipalities have asked for and sought, and this bill deals with that.

The proposed Housing Services Act, 2011, would create a new overarching framework for affordable and social housing in Ontario, and I'm very pleased and proud of this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to provide a few comments for the member from Beaches–East York. Because I wasn't in the Legislature on Thursday, I printed out his speech and read it. So I want to make a few comments directly.

I found it interesting. Obviously, I'm a new member of the Legislature. I was elected a year ago last Friday. I was a mayor like Mr. Prue. I was a mayor of a very small community many years ago. I enjoyed his speech giving a little background about the Beach. It was an interesting quote, right off his lead-off, where he talked about, "Isn't that a rich place?" So I particularly appreciated his comments about his own riding, where he talked about places like Crescent Town, Barrington and Lumsden, but I also believe that he made some very good points about wait-lists and the fact that the government, through this legislation, needs to get their head around the fact that there are massive wait-lists for housing in the province.

Just on my own riding of Leeds–Grenville, when I spoke on this housing bill I expressed concern about how the government has been dealing with this file. I know my local service manager, the united counties of Leeds and Grenville, has been very active in trying to reduce the wait-lists, which, granted, compared to the ones that the member for Beaches–East York talked about, are quite small compared to the ones in the city of Toronto. Yet we have made an effort, in my small rural riding, to try to get some government funds.

We've been stymied by the government in terms of our plans, so I really hope that, when this bill moves forward, goes to committee and hopefully hearings, we'll have a chance to deal with issues, especially ones like the member for Beaches–East York spoke about last Thursday.

0910

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Beaches–East York has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I thank the members from Eglinton–Lawrence, Durham, Chatham–Kent–Essex and Leeds–Grenville for their input, but I really must state that I don't know whether some of the members actually listened to what I had to say. Some of the members in their comments never even referred to that I was—I don't even think they knew that I was the one who was here and was the last speaker, because they talked only about government initiatives.

I have to tell you that this bill is going to do nothing to satisfy the five tests, as set out by the Housing Network, which was the last thing that I had an opportunity to speak about. This is a housing strategy with absolutely no money and a housing strategy which is not going to see any houses actually built. This province and the members opposite ought not to be proud of their role in producing housing in Ontario because Ontario, as in so many other fields, is dead last in the field of housing. We have the lowest per capita amount of money that is given for housing of any jurisdiction in Canada, and that includes the territories. So for a government to stand there and talk about what they're doing, knowing that they're doing almost nothing and that every other province in Canada is spending more money per capita than we are here in Ontario, is not to say very much about this government's plan.

There could have been many things done within the body of this, just to simply allow municipalities the freedom to zone to allow for affordable housing. It's not something they're forced to do, but any municipality that wanted to or could have, should have been there. The backlogs continue to grow.

This bill is not a bad bill, but it's not going to do what is necessary. It's a little, tiny tinkering around the edge, which this government is so very adept at.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

On December 2, 2010, Mr. Bartolucci moved second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2010, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000

and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote will be deferred until after question period this morning.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA SANTÉ ET LA SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL

Mr. Sousa moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 160, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to occupational health and safety and other matters / Projet de loi 160, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail et la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne la santé et la sécurité au travail et d'autres questions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I am sharing my time with the member from Scarborough Southwest.

I am pleased to stand for second reading of the Occupational Health and Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 160. As mentioned, I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant today, the member from Scarborough Southwest.

This bill represents the first major review and the largest overhaul of Ontario's occupational health and safety system in 30 years. The bill calls for many changes, but has one goal, and that is to help ensure that working Ontarians go home safe and healthy at the end of their workday.

We are proposing a road map forward for the future so that this province's working people have a future free of injury and occupational health disease. We are proposing a framework for improved workplace health and safety. Our stakeholders will be consulted as we build on this framework and work to achieve the best implementation of the panel's recommendations. We are acting to protect our working citizens. That, above all, must be our goal.

I will outline the significant changes the proposed legislation calls for. But first, I would like to recognize some of the many people who worked hard to bring these proposed changes forward. On December 16, 2010, the expert advisory panel, headed by Tony Dean, delivered its final report. As many of you know, Mr. Dean is a former Deputy Minister of Labour and is a professor in the School of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Toronto. The final recommendations of this

expert advisory panel struck a balance between two key factors: a need to provide better protection and support for workers, especially young and new workers and recent immigrants, and a need to improve the way we reach out to and help the business community, particularly small businesses, to comply with our health and safety laws.

Our government accepted the panel's recommendations. I would like to thank and show my appreciation to the members of the panel for dedicating their time to accomplishing this report. Just as importantly, these representatives of workers, business, health and safety experts reached their recommendations by consensus, knowing how important their undertaking was to the lives of working Ontarians. Their approach made a consensus report possible, and consensus on such a critically important matter is invaluable for success. As we bring this proposed legislation forward, we would hope it will be considered in the same atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation that existed on the expert panel and that we constantly remember that we share the common goal of keeping Ontarians safe.

On behalf of my government and the people of the province, I would like to thank the members of the expert advisory panel: Bud Calligan, retired secretary-treasurer of the Carpenters' District Council of Ontario; Carmine Tiano, director of WSIB advocacy and occupational services of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario; Vernon Edwards, health and safety director of the Ontario Federation of Labour; Joan Eakin, professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health; Carolyn Tuohy, senior fellow, School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Toronto; H. Allan Hunt, senior economist, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, in Michigan, United States; Domenic Mattina, vice-president of sales and estimating at Mattina Mechanical Ltd.; Jattinder Dhillon, vice-president of health, safety, wellness and business continuity for corporate human relations at Loblaw's Canada; and John A. Macnamara, vice-president of health, safety and environment for Hydro One.

There are many more individuals from many stakeholder organizations who gave invaluable assistance to working groups that provided input to the panel, including working groups on vulnerable workers and on the underground economy. Important for the essential input it provided was the small business subcommittee. I would also like to recognize the hard work that the Ministry of Labour staff put into bringing this legislation forward to us.

As I mentioned, this is a consensus report. There are many consultations that occurred. Overall, the expert panel received more than 400 responses and submissions during consultations and conducted more than 50 meetings with stakeholders. The expert panel held regional meetings in London, Windsor, Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Toronto. As well, the panel's chair provided two updates to stakeholders during the review—once in June 2010 and again in September 2010. Altogether, that is a

lot of consultation with workplace parties. Our stakeholders played a significant role as key players in building the structure, in assembling the enabling framework, that will help us move forward in prevention. There will also be more opportunities for consultation and input as we continue to work closely with stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the expert panel.

**0920**

Since this government assumed office in 2003, Ontario's annual rate of workplace injuries has dropped substantially, by 30%. We have worked hard to make working Ontarians safer, but we know there's much more to do. There are still workers—family and friends, loved ones—who are not coming home at the end of the work day or are coming home injured. We can do better and we will. We owe this to ourselves and our loved ones; we owe it to the people of this province, whom we represent. Any workplace death or injury is simply one too many. That is why we're taking action. It is because we care about the well-being of our province's workers and want to begin implementing the consensus recommendations of the expert panel. Simply put, it is the right thing to do right now.

We believe our proposed legislation, if passed, will save lives and help prevent injuries as we move forward. Under our proposed amendments, the minister would assume responsibility for prevention. This will help coordinate, align and strengthen our prevention enforcement activities.

A new chief prevention officer, reporting to the Minister of Labour on strategic priorities, would provide day-to-day leadership on the prevention of workplace injury and occupational disease. This change will provide us a new position to provide leadership and focus in preventing workplace death and injury.

The Ministry of Labour would expand its involvement in workplace health and safety education and promotion.

The Minister of Labour would have oversight of the province's health and safety associations, under the leadership of the chief prevention officer: again, better alignment and coordinating our activities.

A new prevention council with representatives from the worker and employer communities as well as health and safety experts would provide valuable input in the direction that the health and safety system takes with respect to preventing occupational injury and disease. This new prevention council would keep our stakeholder communities engaged and in touch as we move ahead.

The minister would have the authority to establish standards for health and safety training in order to enhance this training and ensure workers are properly trained.

Workers, especially the most vulnerable workers, would have improved protections against reprisals for exercising their rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The legislation would ensure that the framework would be in place to improve the system of health and safety for Ontario's workplaces.

The major components of these proposed amendments would, if passed, come into effect on or before April 1, 2012. Our amendments will better allow us to create codes of practice that could better provide assistance to employers, especially small businesses, and guide them in complying with our health and safety laws.

As I said, we will continue to consult on the implementation of these changes as we move forward. Consultation and further advice from stakeholders and the interim prevention council will assist the ministry, in the months ahead, to ensure cost-effective and thoughtful implementation of these reforms.

The expert panel heard from stakeholders who said they wanted to better coordinate and align the province's health and safety prevention activities. We listened, and so the structural changes proposed in our bill would improve the integration of prevention programs and be led by a chief prevention officer accountable to the minister. This is a change that we believe would strengthen and better align our health and safety efforts to the benefit of all.

The expert advisory panel highlighted the need for better alignment of the occupational health and safety system, with greater support for vulnerable workers and for business, especially in helping small business understand how to comply with legislative requirements. The mandate in accountability for prevention under our bill would be transferred from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to the Ontario Ministry of Labour. This will not only better align and coordinate our efforts, we believe it will enhance accountability and transparency and offer greater opportunities for stakeholder engagement.

If the prevention function is assumed by the Ministry of Labour, this would mean that funding would come under the same review and approvals process of all provincial government expenditures. For example, the minister would have to seek approval from treasury board and cabinet for prevention-related expenditures. Such spending would also be subject to public scrutiny through the estimates and public accounts process and publications.

Finally, under this bill, the minister is required to publish the chief prevention officer's annual report.

All of these new requirements will support and, in fact, improve transparency, and so, in addition to helping make workplaces safer and healthier, the new structure would be more accessible to both labour and small business and accountable to them and to the public.

Our bill would provide that the Minister of Labour have oversight of the province's health and safety associations. These powers can be delegated to the chief prevention officer.

Our changes would mean that the health and safety system is working together effectively and efficiently. This was another key recommendation of the expert panel. Stakeholders asked for enhanced coordination and alignment between the activities of the health and safety

agencies, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and the Ministry of Labour enforcement and policy priorities.

Under our bill the chief prevention officer, the CPO, would be responsible for establishing a provincial occupational health and safety strategy. This CPO would ensure that this overall provincial health and safety strategy was aligned across all systems partners. The chief prevention officer proposed in our legislation would directly report to and provide an annual report for the Minister of Labour on the statutory mandate and to the Deputy Minister of Labour on administrative public services matters.

It's important to add that under the proposed new model contained in our bill, health and safety associations would be funded through government transfer payments and would work under the direction of the chief prevention officer. This approach would be fiscally neutral to the government and would not add to employers' WSIB premiums. The revenue that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board currently spends on prevention would instead be allocated to the Ministry of Labour for the new prevention organization. The ministry is currently working with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to develop a transition plan that would include the transfer of funds for prevention services to the Ministry of Labour. Employer premiums, which fund the whole of the occupational health and safety system, will not go up as a result of the Ministry of Labour taking on the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's current prevention functions.

Under our bill, a new prevention council consisting of both employer and worker representatives would be an important partner in setting the direction for the ministry's prevention activities and would work closely with the chief prevention officer. This, again, was a key recommendation of the expert panel report.

The involvement of our key stakeholders is a priority for us, moving forward. The prevention council would advise the minister on the appointment of the new chief prevention officer and advise the CPO on the occupational health and safety strategy. And as the CPO contemplates significant new changes to the health and safety system, the prevention council chair would be asked to tell the minister whether he or she endorses that direction of change.

As my ministry and I have announced, our government has appointed an interim prevention council to help improve workplace health and safety in the province. The interim prevention council will help the province implement the key recommendations of the expert advisory panel, including the recruitment of a chief prevention officer. This interim council is led by Paavo Kivisto, retired Deputy Minister of the Environment and former Deputy Minister of Labour. The interim prevention council includes Joan Eakin, Vernon Edwards, John A. Macnamara, Domenic Mattina and Carmine Tiano. I would like to acknowledge all these individuals and say that I could not be more pleased with the expertise and commitment these leaders are bringing forward to our efforts. Going forward, the permanent prevention council

will be established and the chair will be selected by the members of the council.

A key recommendation of the expert safety panel's report calls for increased health and safety training for our province's workers, especially in high-risk occupations. The consultations led by the expert panel showed us that many workers are not aware of their basic rights and responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

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The panel found that workers were not aware of such basic rights as the right to refuse unsafe work or to receive appropriate information—the right to know, including the right to receive appropriate instruction and supervision—or the right to participate in making workplaces safe through the joint health and safety committees or safety representatives. And so, as recommended in the report, our amendments would empower the Minister of Labour to approve health and safety training standards and programs.

We are proposing that all health and safety representatives in workplaces with six to 19 employees be trained to carry out their health and safety duties. They currently do not require any training, and the expert advisory panel felt that this caused higher risk in small workplaces. Basic health and safety awareness training for workers will improve the knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, and thereby improve their safety and help safeguard their health.

These provisions would come into force on a date yet to be determined to allow for sufficient time to develop the training standards and, importantly, to consult with both business and labour on their effective implementation and to make sure we achieve the best results for the money spent.

Another provision in the bill deals with workplace reprisals. The expert advisory panel concluded that when non-unionized workers are fired or otherwise punished by an employer for exercising their rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, there is no quick mechanism for these workers to obtain timely redress. Therefore, our proposed amendments would allow the Ontario Labour Relations Board to deal with such claims in a more timely manner. In addition, inspectors would be given the power to refer the matter to the Ontario Labour Relations Board in certain circumstances if the worker agrees. Workers, especially those most vulnerable workers, would have improved protections against reprisals.

The panel also recommended that the offices of the worker and employer advisers could, in the future, provide support for both workers and employers in reprisal cases. The proposed amendments include a regulation-making authority to allow for this.

This provision to protect against reprisals, if passed, would preserve the neutrality of the Ministry of Labour inspectors. It would ensure that they couldn't be called as a witness by one of the parties to reprisal proceedings. It would also ensure that the reprisal proceedings would not

be delayed unnecessarily by requests for inspectors to attend at hearings before the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

Such statutory provisions concerning the ability of inspectors to testify in civil and other proceedings are common. Similar provisions also appear in other Ministry of Labour statutes—for example, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Employment Standards Act.

We will be setting up a section 21 committee for vulnerable workers. This will help ensure that the key stakeholders who represent the workplace parties can give needed input and advice on reaching out to and protecting those workers who are often at the greatest risk in the workplace.

The expert panel has recommended, and we will be moving forward with, new and enhanced efforts to reach out to young workers. We will help develop materials and programs to help ensure that teens entering the workforce know their rights and their responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We owe it to our young people, our children, to give them the knowledge and the tools to keep themselves safe as they enter the workforce.

The expert panel recommended, and we will move forward with, strengthening the foundation of our occupational health and safety efforts, and that is the internal responsibility system. This system to ensure that the workplace parties are working together to achieve and improve safe and healthy working conditions comes out of another historic review of our health and safety system: the Ham commission that was chaired by the renowned Dr. James Ham.

In the expert panel's report, the internal responsibility system was seen as the right approach to assuring that the workplace parties are actively engaged in preventing workplace injury and disease. This, in the words of the report, "is because Ministry of Labour inspectors cannot be in all workplaces at all times."

Workplace health and safety is everyone's responsibility. The anti-reprisal provisions of our legislation, as well as the support for small business, will strengthen the internal responsibility system. As part of our support to small business, there will be a new section 21 committee to address the needs of small business.

We have listened to the expert advisory panel, with its representation from workers, employers and various health and safety experts. We have carefully considered the recommendations of the panel—recommendations based on broad consultations with workplace parties and representatives. We have accepted the recommendations of the expert panel, and thank all those who worked so hard on the panel's report.

The panel's report was a call to action, and we are acting by bringing forward this legislation. Our government believes that by working together, we can continue to foster workplaces that are healthy, safe and harmonious, and by doing so also build a strong economy. We believe our bill, over time, can and will save lives and

prevent injuries among Ontarians. The working people of this province and those who depend on them deserve no less.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Scarborough—Southwest.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I rise to address the second reading of the Occupational Health and Safety Statue Law Amendment Act, 2011.

This legislation is about our hope for and our commitment to safer and healthier Ontario workplaces. It is about working together, all of us: employees and employers, health and safety stakeholders and experts and the government that represents them. It is about working better, and that means better aligning and coordinating our health and safety systems and our efforts and resources. It is about working to change a system to ensure the well-being of the working people of this province and their ability to come home at the end of the workday safe and sound. It is about listening to our stakeholders, because our proposed legislation is a direct result of the recommendations of the expert advisory panel, and those recommendations are the direct result of consultation and co-operation. The expert panel reached out to and included input from both key stakeholders and the public. We have emphasized that the panel's consultation process received more than 400 responses and submissions and conducted more than 50 stakeholder meetings. We talked about the regional meetings for input—meetings that were held in London, Ottawa, Sudbury, Toronto, Thunder Bay and Windsor. The panel listened, and we have also listened, and have accepted the panel's recommendations.

Now we are acting to bring forth this legislation. The expert advisory panel report and recommendations reflect and represent the hard work, collaboration and expertise of the panel members, as well as the significant input from stakeholders who gave their best advice in the interests of making workplaces safer. In our proposed legislation, we are embarking on a major change in our province's occupational health and safety system, the biggest change since the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act was adopted over 30 years ago.

We are moving ahead to develop new partnerships, new tools and a new structure that will better serve the needs of our people: a structure that is more responsive, effective and efficient; a structure that will promote a culture of health and safety in Ontario workplaces. At the end of the day, and certainly for the end of the citizens' workday, the goal is and must be workplaces that are safe and healthy. Our proposals are a road map forward to ensure we are providing a more promising future for working men and women.

This bill is not an end point, but a beginning. Our proposed changes would create a framework for us to build on together.

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Many of the panel's recommendations will be phased in over time to allow for further consultation on detailed proposals. We want to ensure that the workplace parties

have an opportunity to become familiar with and prepare for the new duties and responsibilities that will be required.

The implementation of the panel's recommendations requires not only legislative changes, but also the development of new operational policies and new procedures. This work will go forward in consultation with the interim prevention council, prevention system partners and stakeholders.

Our legislation is a first step in what will be our walk together to protect Ontario's working people. Our proposals are a foundation for what will be a work in, and for, progress in workplace safety. Progress means safer and healthier workplaces for new and young workers, for recent immigrants and for workers who are at the greatest risk, those who are most vulnerable.

Our bill would enable us to build a more integrated health and safety system, a system where our prevention goals are more closely aligned with policy and enforcement efforts, a prevention system that is more accountable and transparent to the people that it exists to serve.

Also critical to our new system will be training and protection for workers who use that training and exercise their rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. That is why we accepted and are proposing to move forward with new mandatory basic health and safety training for workers and supervisors. This training is necessary for our internal responsibility system to work, and our internal responsibility system is key in making our overall prevention system work. And as we've underlined, there will be more consultation on training before requirements are put in place.

We have said that Ministry of Labour inspectors cannot be in all the province's workplaces at all times. That is why we depend on the workplace parties working together in an informed environment and constructively working towards the common goal of increased health and safety.

This only makes sense for our workers and for employers. We know the tremendous cost that workplace injuries inflict: the cost in human suffering, in lost productivity, the cost to the workplace safety and insurance system. The average cost of a workplace injury in Ontario in 2008, according to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, was \$24,133 in direct costs and \$96,532 in indirect costs per lost-time injury. But those numbers do not and cannot include the immeasurable emotional costs borne by the families who have lost a loved one or have a family member who has been injured on the job. There's no price that we can attach to human suffering or certainly to the tragic loss of life. That is why we are proposing this legislation; that is why we appointed the expert panel on health and safety; and that is why we have accepted the expert panel's recommendations, which were based on broad input and consultation.

Bill 160, under section 2, would add provisions to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to specify that the Minister of Labour is responsible for administering the act and that as part of such administration, the minister's

powers and duties would include the following: the promotion of public awareness of occupational health and safety; the education of employers, workers and others about occupational health and safety; the fostering of commitment to occupational health and safety among employers, workers and others; and making grants to support occupational health and safety, which would include funding research.

Let me say a few words about the prevention council. Our bill adds a number of provisions regarding the creation and operation of a new multi-stakeholder prevention council. Council members would be appointed by the minister and would include representatives of workers and employers as well as experts in occupational health and safety. The council would also select a chair from amongst its members.

The key functions of the council will be to advise the minister on the appointment of the chief prevention officer, or the CPO, and anything else the minister specifies, and advise the chief prevention officer on various matters, including the prevention of work-related injuries and illnesses, the provincial occupational health and safety strategy, an annual report, and proposed changes to the funding and delivery of services to prevent work-related injuries and illnesses.

I would also like to say a few words about the chief prevention officer. Our bill, under section 8, would add a new section to the Occupational Health and Safety Act requiring the minister to appoint a chief prevention officer to do the following:

- exercise any duties or powers delegated by the minister;
- develop a provincial occupational health and safety strategy;
- prepare an annual report;
- advise the minister on preventing work-related injuries and illnesses; and
- advise the minister on any proposed changes to the funding and delivery of prevention services.

The creation of the provincial strategy on occupational health and safety called for in our proposals would do some of the following things: It would set goals for occupational health and safety system partners, include performance indicators to measure the progress made toward achieving goals, and be approved and published by the minister.

The chief prevention officer's annual report to the minister would report on the achievement of the goals set in the provincial strategy and also be published by the minister.

The chief prevention officer, or the CPO, would be required to consult the prevention council and consider its advice in developing the provincial strategy and the annual report. Throughout our proposed changes, there is a lot of provision for accountability and transparency. This is what the stakeholders told the expert panel they wanted. This is what our bill provides.

Under section 6 of this bill, there would be added a new requirement for employers and constructors to en-

sure that the health and safety representative is trained to effectively perform the duties of a representative. The minister could set standards for such training.

Under section 7 of the bill, there are provisions that would enable either co-chair of a joint health and safety committee to make written recommendations to the employer if the committee has failed to agree on a recommendation. The Ministry of Labour has appointed an interim prevention council made up of five members of the expert advisory panel and an interim chair. This council will advise the minister on an interim basis regarding the expert panel's recommendations, and it will recruit a chief prevention officer. This chief prevention officer is expected to be appointed by June 2011.

The Ministry of Labour has also established an implementation team with staff from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, the health and safety agencies and from the ministry itself. This team is setting up a number of working groups with representatives from the health and safety system partners, and others, to look at implementation of the panel's recommendations.

I've outlined some key provisions of our bill and the road forward. But for a moment, I want to talk about what the Ministry of Labour has done and accomplished during our time in government. We have been actively promoting construction safety across the province. We all want our loved ones to come home safe and sound after a hard day's work. We have done more than any other government to ensure and protect the health and safety of workers on construction sites. The Ministry of Labour now has more than 400 highly trained ministry health and safety professionals supporting enforcement every day. The lost-time injury rate has decreased by more than 30% since 2003. That's a reduction of more than 25,000 injuries. That means that just last year alone, our inspectors conducted over 62,000 field visits. Of all these field visits, more than 41,000 were proactive. Within this same time period, over 30,000 workplaces were visited across the province. During these visits, health and safety inspectors issued over 98,000 orders. That's progress.

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We've got inspectors out on job sites every day, but more needs to be done and will be done. This bill is about pushing even further to usher in a new era of collaboration to reduce the number of workplace injuries. The expert panel was a true example of workplace parties, of representatives of labour and of business working together. Only through co-operation and working together can we achieve our goals.

Let's continue this spirit of co-operation. Let's move forward toward the common goal of safeguarding Ontario's workers. I know we all share that goal in this Legislature, so this bill should be one that we all support.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to listen to a very important bill this morning, Bill 160, amending the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and to the minister's

opening remarks. Our critic is actually in the midst of preparing his remarks to respond to this important bill.

We all want the workplaces in Ontario to be safe. Certainly, a lot has been said and little has been done in terms of the remarks this morning. I think it's all in the plan.

One of the things that did strike me in listening to it is this new—sort of another bureaucratic forum here, this chief prevention officer, who I guess would be appointed by order in council, which would be political. I was wondering if it would be Pat Dillon, who could easily be the Working Families Coalition. He does work with the trades groups; I understand that. It's the work he does about putting the videos on the screens that portray persons and others in certain ways that aren't particularly complimentary.

I think that we need to keep the politics out of it and keep the injured workers at the very front of it. Having worked myself in an industrial work environment and, to a large extent, with WSIB, early return provisions in work and part of the ability of rehabilitation of injured workers, I've been quite familiar with that for several years.

It seems to me that, just listening here—and I've had an opportunity to read some of the preamble of the bill. It's fairly long. There's a very important section to amend the part to deal with injury and disease prevention.

The role of this new committee might be to set goals. Now, I would think that the membership of that would be very critical. I hope again that it's not a political appointment, like we find at the LHINs and other places. We'll keep an eye on it. Everyone wants to protect workers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I've been here in the chamber this morning, along with my NDP colleague the member for Beaches–East York. We listened carefully to the comments made by the minister and his parliamentary assistant. While the minister tries to put the best possible impression forward, this bill warrants serious consideration, analysis and indeed, where need be, critique. Our member the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who is the critic for this matter, will be addressing this bill in due course. I understand, if the week rolls out as we expect, that that will be on Thursday morning. I expect that the Conservative critic's lead will take place tomorrow morning, Wednesday morning.

Let's put this in perspective, because I suspect that this is more likely simply some icing on the cake rather than the cake itself, or anything of real substance. We live in a province, here in the province of Ontario, now in the year 2011, where workers die on a regular and tragic basis. Increasingly, and more often than not, it tends to be new Canadians as workers, people for whom the English language is not their first language, people who are readily exploited in the workplace and workers who tend to be un-unionized.

If this government and this minister were really serious about worker safety, this government would extend card-based certification to all workers in the province so that all workers could join unions and protect themselves by virtue of collective bargaining and union membership. This government would extend the right to belong to a collective bargaining unit and to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement to agricultural workers, who work in one of the most dangerous workplaces in the province and in Canada. Yet this minister turns his back on agricultural workers. This minister turns his back on industrial workers in some of the most dangerous workplaces. He turns his back on the poorest—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** This morning I did listen to the Minister of Labour and the parliamentary assistant on Bill 160. I take a very personal interest in this one. In a previous life, before coming here in 2003, I was a health and training officer with the Coyle Packaging Group in Peterborough, which is a corrugate business, and spent a significant amount of time working with WHMIS and other workplace issues and training.

One of the things that we're looking forward to doing with this bill is to make workplaces safer. We all know that the safer a workplace is, the more productive the workplace is. When we leave in the morning, we say goodbye to a wife, a husband, a partner and loved ones. In the province of Ontario, when you enter your workplace, you should have the expectation that you're going into a safe workplace. It's a continuous effort by the employer and the employee to make sure that happens. Having been involved in this field, I know that you get great participation both from employees and employers, because it's in everybody's best interest to make sure that the workplace is indeed safe.

I know that from the employer's perspective, anything that would help them to have a more efficient, streamlined prevention and compliance system would certainly assist them in living up to the obligations and responsibilities they have under the various occupational health and safety statute law provisions in the province of Ontario.

I've read some of the work that has been done by the expert panel. I think there are some very good suggestions. As this piece of legislation moves through the House and goes to committee, we'll—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments or questions?

The minister has two minutes to respond.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'd like to thank the member for Durham, the member for Welland and the member for Peterborough for their comments.

Let me stress very loudly: This is not about politics. This is about those who are most vulnerable. It's about the health and safety of those workers. That is our primary concern. That's how we're going to behave, and that's how we're going to proceed. As I've said many times, there is a consensus report that was developed. I

hope, in the end, we'll have consensus in this House to help those who are most vulnerable. When it comes to those tragedies, one is one too many.

When it comes to farmers, it was this government that trained over 100 inspectors and did 350 inspections for farmers, not the NDP and not the PCs. We do care, and we'll do our utmost to help those most in need.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move adjournment of the debate at this time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member has moved adjournment at this time. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading debate adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** We have no further business this morning.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** This House stands recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 0959 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**M. Phil McNeely:** J'aimerais accueillir trois visiteurs d'Ottawa qui sont parmi nous. Ils sont dans la tribune du Président ici : le D<sup>r</sup> Bernard Leduc, président-directeur général de l'Hôpital Montfort; Gilles Morin, président du conseil administratif de l'Hôpital Montfort, ancien député d'Ottawa-Orléans et vice-président de cette Chambre quand il était ici; et Michel Tremblay, chef de la gouvernance et conseiller exécutif de l'Hôpital Montfort.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to introduce some people in the members' gallery from Ducks Unlimited Canada who are here today for their awareness day: Julie Cayley, Michelle Stuckless, Joanne Barbazza, Stephanie Walker, Erling Armson, Cam Thompson, Christie-Lee Hazzard, Greg Weeks and Philip Holst.

Also, I want to mention that this afternoon at 4:30 there's a reception in the legislative dining room hosted by Ducks Unlimited Canada.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's my great delight to introduce a number of members of the board and other workers of Victim Services Toronto. We've got Bonnie Levine, executive director; Lauri Reesor, board chair; Tricia Bennett and many other members here today on International Women's Day.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** In the west members' gallery, please welcome page Brittany McCorriston's mother, Susan, and sister Melissa.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** It's my pleasure to welcome students from McMaster University who are here in the west gallery to learn how our Legislature works: Simon Granat, Kevin Simms, Kaitlin Peters, Josh Wybrow, Santino Marinucci, Alex Weatherill, John-Carlo Di Rosa and Amelia Runchee. Welcome.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'd like to welcome back to the Legislature the parents and family of Amanda Belzowski, who's one of our pages, from Don Valley West. Lisa, Dan and Josh Belzowski are here, along with Amanda Werger and Hannah Shuster-Hyman, who are friends of Amanda joining us today.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to welcome Stephen Wasteneys, who lives in the neighbourhood of old Ottawa South in the great riding of Ottawa Centre, and is the president of Ducks Unlimited Canada's Ottawa chapter. Welcome to Queen's Park, Stephen.

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I'd like to welcome to the west gallery somebody who needs no introduction: Smokey Thomas, president of OPSEU. With him is Mr. Al Donaldson, chair of the mental health division of OPSEU, as well as Deborah Gordon, the chair of OPSEU's children sector. They also have Dan Sidsworth, the chair of corrections for MERC, and Roy Jones, who is one of 28 experienced child and youth workers from Whitby who will lose their jobs in April. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** First of all, I'd like to welcome Smokey Thomas, a proud Kingstonian. I'd also like to welcome Mr. Michael Muise, who's the principal of St. Paul Catholic School and of Sacred Heart School on Wolfe Island. Wolfe Island, of course, is one of the communities that is heavily involved in Hockeyville right now for Hockey Night in Canada. Principal Muise is here with his son Avery Muise, and they're in the gallery.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I want to welcome students from the Mattawa Learning Centre in northern Ontario, a high school for older youth. We've got representatives from Webequie, Martin Falls, Eabametoong and Neskan-taga First Nations. They're here with their principal, Denise Baxter. Welcome.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased to introduce a couple of my constituents who are in the House today: Henry and Nelly Baker. They purchased this time in the House to help support our local hospital in Clinton. Welcome and thank you.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'd like to introduce a constituent and friend, Patrick Bogden, who lobbied the Ontario government successfully to distribute December ODSP cheques in Ontario before Christmas every year and is back to visit us again. He's in the visitors' gallery.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I'd like to introduce in the House today the mother and the cousin of page Simon Cook from Oakville. We've got Annette Cook here and Mathew Fedsin.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Alexis Smith from my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, who is seated in the Speaker's gallery today. Alexis, welcome to Queen's Park.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, every day we learn of a new hit to the pocket-books of average Ontario families. Hydro One recently released its 2010 year-end financial results, which confirmed that Ontario families continue to pay for the expensive mess that you're making out of the hydro system. Specifically in this report, we learn that Hydro One now has an unfunded pension liability of \$300 million. We anticipate that Hydro One will be coming forward for yet another rate increase to cover for this mismanagement.

Premier, exactly how much higher are hydro rates going to go to pay for your mismanagement?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm pleased to take the question. I know that my honourable colleague is going to want to recognize that the issue of the unfunded pension liability started under their government. I'm sure he's going to want to recognize that. It's an ongoing issue; it's an ongoing concern.

My honourable colleague says that he's concerned about costs that are being borne by Ontario families. I want to remind my honourable colleague that our plan to move ahead with full-day kindergarten in Ontario, to benefit 247,000 four- and five-year-olds, will save families thousands of dollars in daycare costs every year. So if he's truly committed to ensuring that we keep costs down for Ontario families, then he's going to want to take the opportunity right now to commit to full-day kindergarten for all four- and five-year-olds in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You know, Premier, Ontario families are seeing through your shell game, and they know that they are footing the bill for your inability to get public sector spending under control. Your hydro bureaucracies represent the same kind of bloat we've seen from the McGuinty government across the board.

Hydro One's 2010 financial report goes even further, Premier, and notes that Hydro One added 300 new employees in the last year alone. So instead of getting the relief they need, Ontario families will face yet another rate increase to pay for your bloat in the hydro bureaucracy.

Premier, can you explain to Ontario families why you say you're going to cut the civil service by 5% on one hand but they're going to get stuck with a bill for 300 new employees at Hydro One? Why are rates going through the roof?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

Minister of Energy, I would appreciate being able to hear the question.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There have been more people hired on at the hydro companies. I think my hon-

ourable colleague knows that we're investing billions of dollars in a massive build-out of our electricity system. It's something that should have been done years ago. It's something that they chose to set aside, but it's something that we chose to do. We have some 9,000 megawatts of new generation. We have rehabilitated some 5,000 kilometres of transmission. We're laying the foundation for a new industry—thousands of new jobs.

My friend mentions in passing that he thinks it's important that we better manage public service costs, and again, that's one important reason why he's determined to eliminate full-day kindergarten from Ontario schools. If he's committed to ensuring that Ontario families have some help with their costs, then he's going to want to commit right now to putting in place full-day kindergarten for all four- and five-year-olds.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You know, sadly, Premier, you just seem to shrug off this growing bloat in the public sector, and Ontario families are struggling to pay the bills. You don't respect the fact that Ontario families are stuck with higher hydro bills because of your incredible mismanagement of our energy system.

The unfunded liability at Hydro One is now up to \$300 million. That probably implies a rate increase. The number of bureaucrats working there went up 300 employees in one year alone—pressure for a further rate increase. Now we find out that, in the last year alone, the operating costs of Hydro One are up some \$67 million.

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You claim a victory by saving \$5 million with the ORC merger. Premier, you've increased that thirteenfold with a nearly \$70-million increase in the operating budget.

Premier, when will you rein in the public sector costs? Why do Ontario families always get stuck with the bill for your mismanagement of the energy—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I expect this will be a recurring theme. My honourable colleague says it's important to rein in public sector costs. I want to translate that so that Ontarians can better understand what he means by that.

"Public sector costs" means we can't afford full-day kindergarten for our four- and five-year-olds in Ontario. "Public sector costs" means we can't afford the smaller classes that we have in our schools. "Public sector costs" means we can't afford the 11,000 more nurses that we've hired in Ontario. "Public sector costs" means we can't afford—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members from Renfrew, Simcoe North and Thornhill. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I just want to be clear and to elaborate a little bit more for my honourable colleague when it comes to his plans. He doesn't want to talk about

those, but we get a better understanding every day of what those plans actually are. They represent some dramatic cuts to public services. I think Ontarians have seen that movie, and they don't want to see it again.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: Premier, you've grown increasingly out of touch after your seven years in office. You seem to have no clue that the hydro bill is no longer just another bill; it is the bill for families in Ontario today. They simply cannot afford it, and they find out about your waste.

Premier, you have now, according to the C.D. Howe Institute, spent a billion dollars exporting Ontario power to Quebec and to the States to give them discount power while Ontario families are stuck with skyrocketing hydro bills. Not only do you charge them an arm and a leg for their own hydro, but you send them a bill to subsidize families in Quebec and New York state as well.

Premier, why are the only families getting any relief in hydro customers in Quebec and New York? Why are you sticking families with the bill?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm not sure there's any foundation in fact for any part of that question whatsoever. I think it's a wonderful exercise in fantasy. If my friend were honestly committed to helping Ontarians better manage their hydro costs, then he would support our clean energy benefit, which is taking 10% off our hydro bills for the next five years. It's a practical, pragmatic way to help families. It's a specific example. He might want to tell us why it is that he's against reducing hydro bills by 10%.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Honourable members, I think your leader would like to hear the answer, and the heckling is making it extremely difficult for your leader to hear.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, you've made life increasingly unaffordable for average families and for seniors in our province with your HST tax grab and your skyrocketing hydro bill policy. Premier, many families can't afford to turn on the lights. If they're not up late at night washing dishes because of your time-of-use smart meters, they're up worrying about how they're going to pay their hydro bill. Instead of giving Ontario families any relief, you spend, according to C.D. Howe, a billion dollars in discounts for families in Quebec and New York state.

Premier, why is it the only families getting a break today are families who live in Montreal and in Buffalo?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I disagree fundamentally with my colleague's assertion and with those numbers.

But one thing that's perfectly clear is that his party refuses to support the clean energy benefit. That is, in fact, now reducing electricity bills by 10% for the next—

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Give us a PowerPoint.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Simcoe North.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There's another specific way we're helping Ontario families. We've put in place a new law that is reducing the cost of generic drugs by half a billion dollars. My honourable colleague was given the choice; he had to take a side. He took a side that opposed the interests of Ontario families.

It seems to me that on many occasions now, when presented with specific opportunities to stand up for families, to make sure they have full-day kindergarten, for example, to make sure they have a clean energy benefit or to make sure they have cheaper drugs, he chooses the other side.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, you've chosen sides all right—you've chosen to discount power to Quebec and New York and raise the rates on Ontario families.

How out of touch have you become after seven years in office? You spent the first seven years chasing families out of Ontario to try to find jobs in other provinces. Now you're spending this year chasing them out of Ontario to try to find affordable hydro across the border. What kind of policy are you running in this province?

Premier, you've signed deals that make us get the most expensive power—your pie-in-the-sky schemes for solar and wind—even when we don't need it, and then you have to discount bills to people in Montreal and Buffalo. Why is it the only way to get relief from the hydro bill is to go across the Peace Bridge into Buffalo, New York?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** As they say, everybody is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts.

Here are the facts: In 2002—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Members will please come to order.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The facts are our friends. I would encourage my honourable colleague to understand that.

In 2002, under the previous government, \$500 million was what we paid for importing power. In 2003, we paid \$400 million to import power. Since 2006, as a result of the massive investments we've made in new generation and new transmission, we have so far \$1.5 billion for net exports. We're now in the business of exporting and making money off of our systems. We didn't have enough electricity in the past and we were buying electricity. That's the difference. Those are the facts.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order. The ministers—Minister of Economic Development, Minister of Infrastructure. Member from Oxford, Minister of Community Safety.

New question.

## PAY EQUITY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. It's been a difficult few years for Ontario families: jobs lost, savings destroyed, economic anxiety. It's fair to say on International Women's Day that it's hit women especially hard. Women who work full-time earn only 71 cents for ever dollar earned by men. Women are nearly twice as likely to earn minimum wage.

What's the Premier prepared to do to confront the growing inequality that hits working women so hard?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm pleased to take the question, and I know that I join with all members in celebrating a very important day, International Women's Day.

1050

My colleague will know that when it comes to the minimum wage, we have raised that several times over; it's now \$10.25. That's a 50% increase since 2003. My understanding is that that is the highest among the 10 provinces.

My honourable colleague will also know that one of the most important initiatives that we are pursuing—and I can tell you that young moms in particular speak to me about this all the time. They keep asking, "When is full-day kindergarten coming to our local schools?" That's important, not only by means of providing our kids with the best possible start, but it's an important—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Some 450,000 Ontarians work in minimum-wage jobs; they are disproportionately women. Women are twice as likely as men to work for the minimum wage and twice as likely to work at jobs that keep their families below the poverty line. After promising not to freeze the minimum wage, why did the Premier do just that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, we've raised the minimum wage six or seven times over. It's now \$10.25 an hour. It's the highest in Canada. It represents a 50% increase. I think that is significant.

I can tell you something else that makes us hopeful about the future, and that's how well our students, including our young women, are doing in our schools. I was in a high school this morning, and I'm pleased to report that the graduation rate in Ontario has gone from 68% to 81%. Overwhelmingly, it is young women who are performing better in our schools.

There's a challenge there. We intend to take that up when it comes to dealing with our boys and our young men. But young women are thriving in our schools today in Ontario, and that bodes very well for our future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Without access to adequate income, housing and good jobs, many women and their children are simply trapped. Women are earning less, but the government drags its feet on pay equity. Over half of families headed by single women are living in poverty, but the government freezes the minimum wage. The

government brags about full-day learning, but sits on its hands while child care spaces vanish across this province.

I remember, myself, scrambling between child care and jobs, working my way through those hard years of my early life as a young mother, and I see the situation getting much worse for women today. Why does the Premier keep ignoring the growing inequality that's clearly an issue for working families and women?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** In addition to raising the minimum wage to \$10.25, which is the highest in the country, we've created 22,000 new licensed child care spaces since 2003. We've also—and this is very important to moms as well—developed and increased the Ontario child benefit. It's now \$1,100 per child. Again, that is something else that is at risk from a Conservative government in the province of Ontario.

There's always more work to be done; I'm more than prepared to acknowledge that. But a number of initiatives we've put forward, the NDP have voted against. I would ask for my honourable colleague's support the next time we bring an initiative into this Legislature to advance the cause of women in Ontario.

#### WOMEN'S ISSUES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier. The Canadian Council of Chief Executives is led by the former Liberal MP John Manley. Their membership includes nine women and over 150 men. They recently wrote to the Minister of Finance, encouraging him not to give women and their families a break next budget. The CEOs are saying Ontario should "declare war on spending," the sort of spending that provides long-term care for aging women and child care and helps with the family budget.

Does the Premier find it surprising at all that the only kinds of spending that Canada's richest corporations support are their own multi-billion dollar tax cuts?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As part of the pre-budget consultations, we get input from a variety of sources. Last night, we had 11,000 people in Kitchener–Waterloo on a telephone call talking about their concerns. The night before, we had 10,000 people in Thunder Bay. We've been doing this across the province.

Mr. Manley and the council of chief executive officers wrote a long letter outlining a number of positions, positions which we have to take seriously, as we do other positions. We don't always agree with what various groups advocate, but I can assure you that we will bring forward a budget that builds on our success in education, builds on our success in health care, reduces the deficit and builds a brighter and better future for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Women and their families are struggling to get by. Wendy writes that she's having a hard time paying her home heating bills and says, "I am still working for the same wages from 2008. But everything has gone up." Meanwhile, the CEO lobby

group, 94% of whom are wealthy men with an average income of about \$4 million a year, says "No breaks for families next budget," and the Premier seems to agree.

Why do Canada's CEOs get their multi-billion dollar break, but women like Wendy, struggling to pay the bills, are told that there's nothing at all for them?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think what is conveyed by a number of groups is important for us to take into consideration. I think they're concerned about the level of the province's deficit and debt, because they recognize that our children will pay for that. I think they've advocated in their letter very strongly for continued investments in education and health care, which they see as being important to the future.

That member and her party want to play cheap politics. We want to build a coalition of all Ontarians, Ontarians who are dedicated to the best education system in the world, to the highest-quality public education system in the world and to the tax package that we brought forward, which will create some 600,000 jobs. On this side of the House, we see a better future for our children with the right investments in education and health and the right approach to bringing our budget back into balance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Amanda in New Liskeard writes, "Since the HST has come into effect, I have fallen behind on all my household bills. I have had to get a second job just to make ends meet." Amanda could use a break on her home heating bill, but the Premier and his CEO friends say that a tax break to Canada's richest corporations, like banks and insurance companies, is much more important.

Why is the Premier putting his rich friends first over the priorities of Amanda and women like her across the province?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Last week I had the chance to speak to 5,000 Sudburians, with our member from Sudbury, about their views on the budget. I spoke to 7,500 residents of Sault Ste. Marie about their concerns with the budget. They want to see us invest in education and health care. They want a society that embraces all people. They want an approach to getting back to balance that respects the need to have the best education system, that respects the importance of full-day learning for our youngest students and that respects the need for more post-secondary spaces in Ontario and builds on the investments we've made in health care.

This province has a bright and brilliant future ahead of it. We'll work with all Ontarians to build that future, and I look forward to budget day later this month.

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, yesterday you got caught again. First you got caught saying you had directed Hydro One to pass on \$18 million in legal fees despite the fact that the Electricity Distributors Association is saying Hydro One

was never part of the settlement. Then you got caught saying the majority of Ontario families were benefiting from your smart meter tax machines when data clearly shows otherwise: that the majority are not benefiting. In fact, they're paying more.

How many times do you have to get caught before you'll finally admit you're in over your head?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member is wrong today, like his leader was wrong yesterday.

I cannot believe the bounds of arrogance that these guys want to rise to, when they make false accusations yesterday and then rise in their place today and continue to make those same incorrect accusations. Then yesterday, they sent out a press release that also included those accusations that were patently false—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I let it go once. I would just ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment, please.

1100

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'll withdraw that, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition yesterday continued to make accusations that were incorrect. He did not correct the record yesterday. He did not correct the record today. Does this leader not believe that if he says something that's incorrect in this Legislature he owes the Legislature an apology? That he owes—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I cannot believe the arrogance of that minister. I hope we'll get an answer—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I'd ask the honourable ministers to please come to order.

Please continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I look forward to an answer to this one. We know that Ducks Unlimited are in the building today. They're having a lobby day here, and a reception. Unfortunately, what people are getting out of this party is unlimited ducking when it comes to question period.

Last week we asked you twice to confirm that you were not going to sole-source a new power plant in Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge. You refused to answer both times. Your first action as Minister of Energy was to sign the \$7-billion sole-sourced Samsung sweetheart deal. The reason you refused to answer the question last week regarding sole-sourcing the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge power plant is that you are left with two options: either confirming that are you going to sole-source that power plant or getting caught once again—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think that a Leader of the Opposition has a responsibility in this Legislature in the important role he plays to hold the government accountable. I also believe that he has a responsibility, like all of us, to be very straight-up with the people of Ontario. We've made a point on the energy file to be very straight-up on our long-term energy plan, but accus-

ations were made yesterday that were absolutely incorrect. They were followed up with a press release that was issued from the Leader of the Opposition and his party. That was absolutely incorrect, and he should apologize, and his member should if they want us to treat their questions with credibility here in this place. Their questions should be somewhat in keeping with the facts.

## VICTIMS' SERVICES

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is for the Premier. Recently the government announced its sexual violence action plan. We noticed that in the action plan Victim Services was completely ignored. Victim Services is here today waiting for an answer.

Victim Services is the front-line agency that provides immediate assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Victim Services has not had a cost-of-living increase for two decades. Why is this government endangering its existence by not providing cost-of-living increases to this front-line agency that deals with women at their most vulnerable, as it does for all other agencies?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the minister responsible for women's issues.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to talk about the province's sexual violence action plan: Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives. It is a four-year strategy that includes \$15 million in funding.

The plan builds upon the progress that we've made in the domestic violence action plan, which was launched in 2004, and the solutions that have come to the table come to us from those survivors and front-line workers, 350 of whom we consulted over the last many months. Maria Van Bommel, parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for women's issues at the time, conducted those consultations across the province. The voices of the women are reflected in the strategy, and the strategy is supported by investments of \$15 million. We're very proud of the steps that we're taking. We will change attitudes and change lives with this strategy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Not one penny is going to Victim Services, the front-line agency that goes out with the police, that deals with victims at their most vulnerable. Not only has the government not included Victim Services in the sexual violence action plan and not given a cost-of-living increase for the agency, the government is now looking to cut essential programs, such as the SupportLink program to help victims of sexual abuse. Can the Premier assure us that Victim Services will not face any cuts to their programs?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** We are very proud to have received support from many women's organizations, including sexual assault centres, who lead this work across the province, who are receiving \$3 million in additional resources as a result of this strategy, a 6% increase in their funding. That will allow them to continue to serve women across the province. These dollars are front-line dollars.

These are the voices that we heard from communities' sexual assault centres. That organization, the OCRCC, is the organization with whom we worked closely to develop this strategy. This is a strategy that will respond directly to the needs of women in communities across the province. The member opposite, I would think, would embrace and thank the province for leading the sexual violence action plan.

For the first time in this province we've talked about this important issue, and this comprehensive strategy has come forward as a result.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I have a question today for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, last month you released the 2009 air quality report, and there was much reason to celebrate. It showed decreases in the amounts of carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and fine particulate matter. These are long-term trends that show the air we breathe in Ontario is getting cleaner.

My constituents in Oakville were pleased to hear that air quality was improving. They're still concerned, however, about Oakville's air being considered stressed back in 2006 during smog events. Minister, today, can you confirm that the same air quality improvements seen throughout the province are also occurring in my community of Oakville?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** The number one reason that children are admitted to an ER in the province of Ontario is because of asthma, and the number one reason for that asthma is because of poor air quality.

I'm proud that in Oakville, I can report to the member, there has, in the last decade, been a decline of fine particulate matter of some 33%; and nitrogen dioxide decreased by 19%. This member and this party understand that our children's lungs are more important than that love affair with dirty coal that you have over there. On this side of the House, we are getting rid of dirty coal because our children's lungs deserve that. That's why we're investing in our children with full-day kindergarten: because their minds deserve that.

I want to thank the member from Oakville for being a tireless advocate for his community. We will work closely with the southwest GTA as we work together to improve the air quality because our children deserve it—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** The families in my community and throughout the southwest GTA will be reassured by those reductions.

Dr. David Balsillie was appointed to undertake a study to determine the steps your ministry—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Honourable members please come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Durham should be in his seat, speaking of seats.

Please continue.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Dr. David Balsillie was appointed to undertake a study to determine the steps your ministry could take in the province to improve air quality. The comprehensive air management system proposed at the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment aligned well with the task force plan. The hallmark of both approaches is working well; it's engaging local communities in local air quality issues.

Minister, the residents of my community want to know how they can be involved in the comprehensive air management system.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank the member because he has been a tireless advocate, understanding that communities have to come together. If we're going to address the issues of local air quality, then we need to have people who are willing to do what the MPP for Oakville has done, which is to reach out to the community, to activists, to industry and to the municipalities. Because of his leadership and the leadership shown by Minister Sousa, the southwest GTA is seeing improved air quality. They are very eager to participate in the new national effort that would allow communities to define themselves by way of an air zone and to take actions collectively to improve their air quality, because they understand that it does come down to the very simple question: What is more important, the lungs of our children, or is it more important to have a love affair with dirty coal?

When they were in power, coal production went up 124%. Under this government it has gone down, because our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1110

### CURRICULUM

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, last week your Minister of Research and Innovation said that Ontario families opposed to teaching sex ed to six-year-olds were homophobes. Yesterday, we asked your Minister of Education if she agreed with Minister Murray's comments. She refused to answer.

Premier, do you agree with your Minister of Research and Innovation that Ontario families opposed to your sex ed curriculum are homophobes?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think that Ontarians are fair, hard-working, honest, decent people. They want to ensure that we have a good-quality curriculum in our schools in all areas of subject matter, and I'm sure that my honourable colleague opposite knows that.

At present, we are taking the time to develop a consultation process so that we can better hear from parents.

I want to remind my honourable colleague that there is in fact sex ed in our schools today. We also have some solid equity policies that have been developed here in

Ontario that teach our children that homophobia and racism, for example, are wrong. In fact, in the later grades, we invite students to stand up against those kinds of actions and words, should they ever bear witness to them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, this isn't the first time you've had to clean up a mess left behind by your Minister of Research and Innovation. The last time, it took days for the minister to finally be forced to apologize for his comments on Twitter around the same topic. Now Minister Murray shows he has no respect for Ontario families and says that those opposed to sex ed being taught to six-year-olds are homophobes. Premier, very clearly, will you now condone the latest comments from Minister Murray?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I find it passing strange. I'm not sure I've received a question from the Leader of the Opposition on education yet. The only time they raise issues related to education are in order to somehow launch some spurious attack against a member of the government.

On behalf of Ontarians, we would like to know what their stance is with respect to full-day kindergarten. What is their stance with respect to smaller classes? What is their stance with respect to no strikes in our schools? What is their stance with respect to higher graduation rates and higher test scores? Where do they stand on education?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Simcoe-Grey. The government House leader.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** This is the final warning for the member from Simcoe North.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final warning for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Order.

New question.

## UNION CERTIFICATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. As you well know, men make up the majority of construction workers. These men have been given card-based certification, which means that if 55% of them sign a union card, it is done and automatically certified. I'm really pleased that construction workers have those rights, but every worker should have that right.

Women make up the majority of home care workers. These women have been denied card-based certification. On the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, why does the McGuinty government still have rules that discriminate against women workers?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question from across the way. I recognize that Smokey is here from the union. Welcome to the House.

We recognize how important it is for us to have labour relations in our province, and we're very proud of our record. In 99% of the cases, we have had work-related success without work stoppages. Also, we have introduced card-based certification in our construction trade, given the diversity of that trade.

We recognize how important it is to maintain relations. We will continue to work closely with all those involved, including on issues around pay equity and ensuring that those who are most vulnerable get what they need.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I'm not too sure what he was talking about, but what I'm talking about is card-based certification. Why is it that men get card-based certification and women don't? The question is as simple as this.

Let me read you the standard card that a construction trade—a man—reads and understands: "Yes, I apply for and accept membership in the ABC union." Does the minister really think that this is too complicated for a woman to understand, that they cannot sign a card?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** This is not a gender issue; this is a sector issue. Card-based certification exists in the construction trade for men or women, and it's not based on that issue.

What we do believe, and it is in the collective bargaining process—we recognize that in this province over the last number of years we've had labour peace, unlike what has occurred in the past through the time of the social contract, when you ripped up some of those ideas. We don't believe in that case. We believe in strong relationships with our union members and our workers regardless of gender. We will continue to support those who are involved and will continue to be that way.

## LIQUOR CONTROL

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Attorney General. With summer fast approaching, my community looks forward to the world-class music festivals held each year in my riding of Ottawa Centre. Ottawa's festivals attract visitors from all over the province and, indeed, across the globe. These world-class events attract top-tier musicians and offer a friendly and relaxed outdoor environment for people to enjoy the great performances. Yet, unlike festival-goers the world over, people attending outdoor festivals in Ontario cannot in many cases watch a performance while having a beer or a glass of wine.

Minister, along with the Minister of Tourism and Culture, you recently announced the launch of consultations on the modernization of certain parts of Ontario's liquor laws. Can the Attorney General tell us what these consultations could mean for my community and how Ontarians, Canadians and tourists alike might further enjoy the many great summer festivals Ontario has to offer with the proposed changes to Ontario's alcohol regulations?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member from Ottawa Centre makes a very good point. We have lots of great festivals in the spring, summer, fall and, in fact, in the winter, in the province of Ontario. We've heard from lots of Ontarians that they'd like some more opportunity for—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Hamilton East. Final warning for the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. There are now three of you close to a red card.

Minister?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** They'd like some more opportunity for choice; the ability at a festival, for example, if it was okay with the festival owner and the municipality, to be able to walk around a little bit within a defined area with their drink, have greater enjoyment, enjoy the drink while they're looking at crafts and purchasing crafts. It's just a question of updating and modernizing some of the really old rules. We're going to hear from Ontarians and we hope to be able to provide more opportunity for choice in Ontario when it comes to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Many people are glad to hear the government is responding to what many consider outdated restrictions by considering the needs of business, festivals and the public for a more enjoyable experience for Ontarians and tourists.

There is, however, some mixed reaction to this consultation process among police forces in the province. Indeed, the police in my riding have voiced concerns with regulatory changes in relation to liquor laws. They are concerned that enforcement could be affected and that the relaxed outdoor atmosphere which attracts people to festivals may actually be jeopardized by changing the regulations in this area.

Minister, we all agree that police forces throughout the province do valuable work in protecting our communities and need the support of the province to provide them with the tools necessary to do their job. Can the Attorney General please address concerns raised by my chief of police that the potential changes will actually make the job of police more difficult and thereby endanger our communities?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We really respect the work that our chiefs of police and the police forces do. In fact, I was on the phone yesterday with Chief White of the Ottawa Police Service getting his views and telling him we wanted to hear more. We're having meetings with the chiefs; we're going to be having meetings with the policing community.

Part of the proposal involves extra, more strenuous enforcement and more enforcement options. That's where we want to hit the right balance. We want to provide greater opportunity for Ontarians to enjoy freedom at festivals combined with strong enforcement. We happen to have the toughest drinking and driving laws in North America. We have half the rate of drinking and driving of any other province or territory in Canada.

Strong enforcement, more choice; we think we can hit the right balance. Let's hear from Ontarians on this issue.

1120

## TENDERING PROCESS

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a question for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Minister, I have here an example that illustrates that your ministry—and in fact, your government—not only fails to promote Ontario businesses, but denies them the opportunity to even compete in the provincial RFP process. The specifications of this tender are tailored to specs for the Boston Whaler/Brunswick boats, effectively ruling out any Ontario company from competing. Apparently, aluminium welded boats need not apply. Minister, why aren't you interested in supporting Ontario businesses in your government's own procurement processes?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm going to have to ask the member opposite for more information related to this specific discussion around an RFP, which my ministry doesn't do related to boats.

Having said that, I think it's high time that we started telling people just what we do to promote Ontario business, not just in Ontario but around the world. The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, on average, has 60 missions a year. We have hosted almost 100 incoming buyer/seller forums in Ontario alone, and that's just in the last three years. We have hosted Home Depot's supplier fair and Canadian Tire's supplier fair. All of this is to drag our SMEs, our small and medium-sized enterprises, to do more business in Ontario, in Canada and in the world.

I look forward to the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Well, Minister, what about Ontario jobs and Ontario businesses? Minister, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services led an RFP for a quantity of boats valued at several million dollars. In my own riding, Connor Industries makes vessels used by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and its Quebec counterpart as well as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, and yet they and every other Ontario boat builder say this tender expressly excludes them.

The tender closes today. Minister, will you do the right thing, rip up the RFP and start over so that Ontario companies have at least got a chance to compete on this tender?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** As I said, I'm surprised that he didn't send materials over, because if a member is serious about going to bat for a company in their hometown, they would provide me with paper, provide me with details. That member knows full well that we follow up on every single inquiry. Every member in this House knows that that happens in our ministry.

So let me say this: We have never been more aggressive on the world front, in taking our companies

around the world. There has never been a more active minister or a more active ministry, with 60 missions going to all corners of this globe selling Ontario companies, selling Ontario tax policy, telling people all over the world the benefit of investing in our province, driving more Ontario companies into the supply chain of multinational companies around the world. That's the record of our ministry and I'm proud of that, and if this member is serious he's going to table that material so we can get to the bottom to help more companies do more work in this province—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. This morning, OPSEU is at Queen's Park asking the McGuinty Liberals—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Renfrew. The member from Simcoe—Grey.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This morning, OPSEU is here at Queen's Park asking the McGuinty Liberals to walk the talk on mental health. In fact, a page will bring over these postcards to the Premier—thanks very much, Emily.

In communities across Ontario, mental health services are being cut. Children's Mental Health Ontario is predicting that they will lose the ability to serve 2,000 children across this province this year. The wait time for services is already longer than seven months. Imagine what will happen after this latest round of cuts. Why has the Premier abandoned the pleas of so many mothers and so many families and so many children in need?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I thank the member for the question. I just want to take the opportunity as well to thank all our mental health workers around the province, who work so hard every day and who have been leading the way—they've been working so hard—to take mental health issues out from under the cover of darkness, bring them into the light of day and help all of us understand that mental health is an issue that affects pretty well every Ontario family. They were the inspiration for our 10-year strategy that we are developing now. We are looking to them, in many instances, for guidance. We look forward to releasing that sometime this spring.

There is certainly more work to be done, but I think one sentiment I can certainly share with my honourable colleague opposite and certainly with all members of this House is that we owe a great debt of gratitude to those people who have been working on the front lines in mental health for such a long time now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The only thing in darkness is this government's lack of attention to this particular issue.

In Sarnia, a 14-bed residential facility for girls is set to close its doors at the end of this month. In Whitby,

Ontario, the only long-term-care residential mental health program for children and youth is about to cut 28 child and youth counsellors. In Brockville, 80 clinical and support staff positions at the Brockville Mental Health Centre have been put into limbo as acute mental health services are transferred to the Brockville General Hospital.

Time and time again, I have listened to the pleas of mothers and families who are desperate to get adequate care for their children. These cuts are short-sighted, they ignore the advice of the select committee and the minister's own advisory panel and they hurt families in need. Will the Premier finally put women and their children first and walk the talk on mental health?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I also welcome Smokey Thomas and the folks from OPSEU here. We continue to have many conversations with them with respect to how we can continue to do the important work in this sector.

I do know that one of the things that was said at the press conference this morning was that, in 17 of the last 19 years, we haven't seen increases in children's mental health. I'm proud to be part of the government that's had two increases in children's mental health. We provided the first two base increases in over a decade.

We've provided more than \$64 million to the sector to support and expand services, we've invested \$5.9 million in the Ontario centre of excellence in children's mental health, we've doubled funding to the Ontario child and youth telepsychiatry program and we are listening to mothers and parents as we work with them to develop a family navigator pilot project with Kinark.

We know there's a great deal of work to be done, but the Minister of Health and I have our sleeves rolled up, and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### FARM SAFETY

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Each year in Canada, there are an average of 115 farm deaths and at least 15,000 farm-related incidents. I believe all members of this House would agree that one accident is one too many.

Everyone has a role to play in ensuring there are viable solutions for keeping safe on the farm. Farms are work sites like any other, and farm workers must be provided with a safe and healthy work environment. For many of my constituents in Chatham—Kent—Essex, farm safety is top of mind. Most tell me it's an important and essential component of their operation.

Minister, what initiatives are being undertaken by your ministry and our partners in the agricultural sector to promote safe farming practices here in Ontario?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** This government is committed to ensuring that all farm workers are protected and that

their health and safety is protected. My ministry has been working with Safe Workplace Promotion Services Ontario, formerly the Farm Safety Association, for over 10 years. Our goal is to reduce the occurrence of workplace injuries and illness on Ontario farm, horticulture and landscape operations.

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week gives us the opportunity to reflect on the work that we have done to improve our safety record. My ministry is very pleased to provide Safe Workplace Promotion Services Ontario with \$120,000 annually. Together, in partnership with OMAFRA, they are working on a number of safety initiatives, and those initiatives are: editorials in the Ontario Farmer on safety issues; Safety Days, which are summer camp programs for over 1,800 Ontario children—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** We all know that our farmers are hard at work to put food on our tables, but there are inherent risks associated with the type of work that occurs on our farms. Many of your constituents are farmers—and so are mine—and face these risks each and every day.

I've heard the opposition criticize our government about our health and safety record on farms. Minister, can you provide the House with the facts and tell us what you are doing to ensure farm workers are safe in this province?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I would like to refer this to the Minister of Labour.

1130

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** Thank you very much for the question. I'd also like to thank the Minister of Agriculture for her continued support of our province and our agricultural workers.

To the member's question, let me be clear when I say that there is only one government in this House that is on the side of Ontario farmers and that has actually acted when it comes to protecting our farm workers.

I've heard the opposition talk, but it was our government that, in 2006, extended the Occupational Health and Safety Act to cover farm operations. Our government trained 100 of our health and safety inspectors specifically in farm safety, not the NDP and certainly not the PC Party. We're inspecting over 350 farms a year. When we started, 50 were being inspected. The result: Lost-time injuries have been cut in half.

The parties opposite seem to be interested in pulling people apart, but we're working together with the Minister of Agriculture and all of our partners. We're bringing people together for a better—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### LANDLORD AND TENANT DISPUTES

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Ontario's rental property owners are calling on your government to modernize

the rent dispute process in this province. It typically takes 90 days for a dispute to be resolved, costing landlords about \$5,200. That figure doesn't take into account administrative costs, lost time and productivity.

Your government has put a strain on the rental housing sector, especially the small landlords, and there is a great risk that they will get out of the industry altogether, creating uncertainty for the 1.3 million rental households.

Why have you done nothing to modernize the rent dispute process in order to create a system that is fair, both to tenants and landlords?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The member better read her briefing notes, because nothing can be farther from the truth. We made extensive changes to a program that was unfair, to a program that was biased, to a program that had no balance at all to it. We made those changes because those changes were important. They were important to landlords, and they were important to tenants. We are very, very proud of the balance we put in that legislation, unlike the previous government, where the balance was so skewed, so biased and so unfair.

When we formed the government, we decided that there had to be fairness and there had to be balance. We ensured, with the amendments and the changes that we made, that that balance was there and that that fairness was there, because—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** To the minister, the truth speaks for itself. The facts are the facts, and you can't dispute that many of these cases take up to 90 days to resolve. Minister, no other business is required to provide goods or services without payment, yet landlords must allow tenants to stay, even without payment.

Vince Brescia, the president of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario, says that this particularly affects small landlords who must find ways of making up lost costs from rental charged to all tenants, even those who do pay their rent.

Property owners and the majority of tenants are in favour of modernizing the rent dispute process by reducing hearing times from 29 to five days. Will you finally support Ontario families across this province with their request to reduce the existing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** This is a fundamentally important question. They know where we stand. I'd like to know where they stand. I know one thing for sure: I have yet to hear the leader of the PC Party, the leader of the official opposition, mention social housing in this House. I have never heard the words "social housing" from the mouth of the PC leader.

Let's talk about balance. They know where we stand when it comes to protection for landlords and tenants. They understand that we have struck the balance that is good for landlords and good for tenants. I want to know: Where do they stand? What is their position? The people

of Ontario, the tenants of Ontario and the landlords of Ontario want to know: What is the PC plan?

### PAY EQUITY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Premier, and it's a very simple one. Why has the Premier allowed women to earn 29% less than men in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the minister responsible for women's issues.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm so pleased that women's issues are getting such a good hearing in the Legislature today, because today we celebrate 100 years of International Women's Day.

We know, as a government, that to have a prosperous Ontario, we need women to be at their best, and that's why we developed and created the Ontario child benefit. The Ontario child benefit allows mothers in many instances to be able to have support for their child as they make decisions in their own lives about how to move into the workforce and into the education system, and we know that those investments have helped lift mothers out of poverty. That's why we went to bat for child care in Ontario and we invested, permanently, \$63.5 million. Around this time last year, we were talking about this issue. Those investments were made in the budget. When the federal government stepped away, we stepped in. Unfortunately, the NDP didn't support that initiative. We look forward to having their support when we continue to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** And women are still earning 29% less than men in the province of Ontario. For the past seven years, this government has ignored their own pay equity legislation by failing to pay the adjustments owed to working women, and the government has refused to commit to a plan that would finally close this gap. Pay equity is not a privilege. Pay equity is not a frill. Pay equity is a human right; it's the law.

Why won't the McGuinty Liberals do the right thing and ensure that women workers are paid wages that are free of gender-based discrimination? Why won't they make it fair?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** As I said, our government has demonstrated our commitment to helping women bridge the wage gap by increasing the minimum wage to \$10.25, by creating 22,000 new child care spaces, by providing more than \$21 million annually to assist child care operators and other agencies to meet their pay equity obligations—\$21 million into the sector.

The NDP claim to support and stand up for women, but their record goes against that. They failed to support the Ontario child benefit. They failed to support the creation of 22,000 new affordable child care spaces. They failed to support the raising of minimum wage. They haven't supported Ontario families following the early learning agreements. We ask them to stand with us,

to call upon the federal government to step back in where they have failed Ontario families when it comes to child care, and so far, they have refused. They need to pick up the phone and call Jack Layton.

### FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Minister, Ontario is home to many of the world's renowned festivals and events. These festivals showcase all that Ontario has to offer. Festivals such as the 4th Line Theatre and the Globus Theatre summer seasons and the Buckhorn Fine Art Festival demonstrate just some of the attractions in my community.

Festivals across Ontario attract millions of people from across Ontario, Canada and the world, contributing \$22 billion to the economy and creating thousands of jobs. However, as our economy is recovering from the global financial crisis of 2008-09, we must make strategic investments that will have a significant impact in our communities. My riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock needs the additional investments to attract tourists, create jobs and ensure sustainability.

How will the minister ensure that these investments are bringing forward the best value for dollar?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member for the question.

There are many benefits in investing in festivals and events. Last year, despite the economic crisis, festivals and events generated over 22,000 jobs. This is why on March 1, this year, our government enhanced our support to the sector. Through Celebrate Ontario, we are investing \$20 million across the province. This brings our total investment since 2003 to \$186 million.

Our investments will support world-class festivals in every corner of the province. Beyond the economic benefits, festivals showcase Ontario's heritage, diversity and culture and provide children the chance to learn and families the chance of being together. Our government's Open Ontario plan is attracting tourists and creating jobs.

### DEFERRED VOTES

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION  
LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT,  
2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT  
DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL  
À LA COMMISSION DE TRANSPORT  
DE TORONTO

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission /  
Projet de loi 150, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail à la Commission de transport de Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1140 to 1145.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On February 24, 2011, Mr. Sousa moved second reading of Bill 150. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Arnott, Ted  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
Colle, Mike  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine

Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick  
Jones, Sylvia  
Kwinter, Monte  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McGuinty, Dalton  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Miller, Norm  
Milloy, John

Mitchell, Carol  
Moridi, Reza  
Munro, Julia  
Murray, Glen R.  
O'Toole, John  
Oraziotti, David  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadi, Shafiq  
Ramsay, David  
Sandals, Liz  
Savoline, Joyce  
Shurman, Peter  
Smith, Monique  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Yakabuski, John

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Those opposed?

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Gélinas, France  
Hampton, Howard

Horwath, Andrea  
Kormos, Peter  
Marchese, Rosario  
Miller, Paul

Prue, Michael  
Tabuns, Peter

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 73; the nays are 10.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated March 3, 2011, this bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

### STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT, 2011

### LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT DES COLLECTIVITÉS FORTES GRÂCE AU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2011, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts /  
Projet de loi 140, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement, abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la

réforme du logement social et apportant des modifications corrélatives et autres à d'autres lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On December 2, 2010, Mr. Bartolucci moved second reading of Bill 140. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Arnott, Ted  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bisson, Gilles  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Steve  
Colle, Mike  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine

Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Gélinas, France  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hampton, Howard  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Horwath, Andrea  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Johnson, Rick  
Jones, Sylvia  
Kormos, Peter  
Kwinter, Monte  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Marchese, Rosario  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McGuinty, Dalton  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine

Miller, Norm  
Miller, Paul  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Moridi, Reza  
Munro, Julia  
Murray, Glen R.  
O'Toole, John  
Oraziotti, David  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gerry  
Prue, Michael  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadi, Shafiq  
Ramsay, David  
Sandals, Liz  
Savoline, Joyce  
Shurman, Peter  
Smith, Monique  
Sousa, Charles  
Tabuns, Peter  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Yakabuski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 84; the nays are zero.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** So ordered.

There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1152 to 1500.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I am pleased and honoured to have a delegation from the sunniest island in the Mediterranean, Sicily, with us here today. They are on a trade mission with the Sicilian association in Ontario.

We have Dr. Luciano Luciani, president of Istituto Italiano Fernando Santi, and Dr. Pippo Cipriani, a member of Parliament from Sicily. We have Mrs. Maria Rita Di Micele, together with the member from the Sicilian government, Dr. Cipriani. We have the president of the

Associazione Trapanesi Emigrati nel Mondo, Mr. Domenic Renda. I know that another member is late. We have Dr. Frank Perricone, who is the ATEM ambassador from Toronto to Sicily. I welcome them.

*Remarks in Italian.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine from the riding of Durham, Mr. Greg Weeks, who's a director with Ducks Unlimited. He's very supportive of the outdoors community.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Vaughan and page Holly Rose Lorenzon, to welcome her mother, Josie Lorenzon, to the Legislature today.

I noted in the members' gallery, also with Ducks Unlimited, a constituent of mine from Aylmer, Ontario: Herb Kebbel. Welcome to Queen's Park today, Herb.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HOWARD NOBLE

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I rise today to pay tribute to a respected businessman, a loving great-grandfather and true gentleman. Howard Noble was a great friend who passed away on February 8 at the age of 92.

I was privileged to know both sides of Howard. As the founder of Noble Insurance, I respected him as an honest, hard-working businessman who always knew what his customers wanted. In private, I admired him as a generous man who cared deeply for his community and even more for his family. He is survived by his son, Wayne; granddaughter, Anne; and two great-granddaughters, Maggie and Abbey.

Simcoe county has a rich past, featuring many characters who left a legacy, and Howard Noble stands firmly amongst the ranks of the most important figures in our region's history.

He started selling insurance in 1945 at the family farm in Mulmur. Combining hard work and a razor-sharp mind for business, Howard made his company a success.

He was a parishioner at St. John's United Church in Creemore and an active member of the Masons, Shriners and Eastern Star.

His generosity extended to countless community projects, including the community centre in Avening and the Station on the Green in Creemore.

He was also a devoted Progressive Conservative who was recognized as an honorary member of the Simcoe-Grey PC association last year. Whether it was a PC breakfast meeting in Creemore or a Christmas party in Wasaga Beach, Howard was always there, often accompanied by his friends Bob Hutchison and Margaret Hughes.

There's no question that Howard Noble left an indelible mark on our community as a businessman and made an even greater impression as a loving family man.

I offer my sincere condolences to Howard's family and his many, many friends.

### BRANT SPORTS COMPLEX

**Mr. Dave Levac:** As a lifelong resident of Brant, I can tell you that when Brant residents come together for a common cause, we move heaven and earth to accomplish our goal.

On Saturday, February 19, hundreds of people gathered to celebrate the official opening of the Brant "twin pad" Sports Complex. It was a modern-day barn-raising that together we made happen. Former NHLer Jay Wells was the honorary co-chair along with Walter Gretzky. Other former NHLers there to celebrate with us were Rick Vaive and Marty McSorley.

I want to congratulate all those who took part in its planning, building and financing, especially Margaret Gurney, who donated the land for the project in memory of her father, Don, and councillor Brian Coleman, who spearheaded the twin-pad fundraising campaign in our community.

In addition to the provincial and federal infrastructure funding, not-for-profit groups like the Lions Club and businesses such as Lafarge Canada and individuals like Roger Davis donated money for the project. According to the Brantford Expositor, a total of 260 donors contributed \$3 million in money and in-kind donations to the project. As residents of Brant, my wife and I did make one of those donations.

To all of those who contributed and to all of those who had a vision and understanding that assets like this arena will help sell our community, we say thank you. This project also saw the return of our very own sledge hockey team, which had to practise in Hamilton. You built this for the kids and for the next generations to come. Thank you. Good work, Brant. We're proud of you.

### DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased today to speak about Ducks Unlimited Canada. We have a number of people here this afternoon in the members' gallery from Ducks Unlimited Canada.

I wanted to point out that they are having a reception here this afternoon—I mentioned that earlier—at 4:30 down in the legislative dining room, and everyone here is welcome to come and enjoy the conversation we have about their awareness day.

There are just a couple of things I wanted to put on the record. The number of supporters in Ontario of Ducks Unlimited is 35,500; volunteers, 1,357. They have 8,970 child volunteers as well who are active in the organization, and 45 employees across Ontario.

As far as their commitment to conservation, their acres of secured habitat are 916,000; the acres of influenced habitat are 537,000; over 1,027 habitat projects; and they have over 2,300 landowner partners in Ontario.

We've all seen Ducks Unlimited partnerships and, of course, we've all been to fundraising events. I personally have been at a number of them over the years. I even have a fridge that says, "Quack open a cold one," in my little cottage up on Gloucester Pool.

Everyone is welcome to come out this afternoon and enjoy the company of Ducks Unlimited Canada and support this great organization in our province and our country.

### IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I am pleased to rise in the House today and share how pleased I am that our government has stepped in to help settlement agencies in this province affected by recent cuts to the federal immigration settlement and adaptation program.

The recent federal announcement to reduce settlement funding in Ontario by \$44 million for 2011-12 will seriously affect the ability of newcomers to settle, integrate and find work here. Ontario welcomes among the highest number of newcomers each year, with the highest immigration retention rate in Canada. A large number of the newcomers who come to this city choose York South-Weston as their first home, and I am proud to say that we have some of the best agencies doing tremendous work for the benefit of the entire community. These cuts, however, will have a significant impact on the essential services they offer.

Our government has stepped in with an investment of \$500,000 to assist community organizations hardest hit by the federal cuts. I was pleased to welcome the Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to the Community Action Resource Centre in York South-Weston to make this welcome announcement. The support will ensure that thousands of newcomers can continue to access settlement services and better integrate, while agencies develop alternative long-term plans.

### FOOD BANKS

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'm rising in the House today to ask the McGuinty government how they are going to help Ontario's most vulnerable families afford to eat, as the price of food is skyrocketing. Economists predict that food prices will rise as much as 10% in 2011. With the cost of energy increasing as well as the cost of food, many families in Ontario are finding food unaffordable.

1510

When families cannot afford to eat they turn to food banks. In 2009, food bank usage increased 19%, and that number has continued to rise. Almost 40% of all Ontario food banks report not having enough healthy local food to meet the ever-increasing demand.

The Recession Relief Coalition just released their 2011 hunger inquiry report. They state in there that "Emergency food programs must provide healthy food, including providing fresh fruits and vegetables."

I call on the McGuinty government to bring Bill 78, a private member's bill to fight hunger with local food, before the general government committee. Bill 78 grants non-refundable tax credits to farmers who donate their excess produce to food banks. This incentive is desperately needed to help food banks feed those vulnerable Ontarians who can no longer afford the price of food. I urge the government to do the right thing and pass Bill 78, and address this food crisis for Ontario farmers and families alike.

### CANCER TREATMENT

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Last week, I had the opportunity and the pleasure to meet with officials from Cancer Care Ontario, including Michael Sherar, their brand new CEO, to get an update on their five-year plan to improve cancer treatment throughout Ontario.

I'm very proud of the work that Cancer Care Ontario performs across this province, and their new five-year plan is progressive and exciting. But I was even more excited to be told that Cancer Care Ontario has taken an active role in PET scan planning for the Ministry of Health. This is a vitally important step in making PET scanning in Sudbury finally become a reality.

Cancer Care Ontario has always demonstrated a strong belief in equity of access to cancer care. I'm confident that Cancer Care Ontario will do the right thing and call for equity of access to PET scans for the people of north-eastern Ontario. After all, Cancer Care Ontario played a leading role in bringing the cancer treatment centre to Sudbury. They have been able to coordinate, in a very disciplined manner, the appropriate treatment needed to care for cancer patients right across the province.

Our cancer treatment centres are the envy of many. They have worked diligently to use best practices to improve treatment and outcomes in both rural and urban Ontario and in towns and cities across northern and southern Ontario. Having Cancer Care Ontario on our side is a huge asset to finally bring a PET scan to Sudbury.

I take this opportunity to thank the tens of thousands of people who have signed the petition. We are being heard.

### CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Last week, I had the opportunity to help host the Ontario Provincial Council of the Catholic Women's League's first Queen's Park meet-and-greet reception. My office was pleased to welcome and assist the dedicated group of women who make up the Ontario provincial council.

Thunder Bay was well represented at the event. It was a particular pleasure to work with Pauline Krupa of the Thunder Bay diocese. Pauline laboured tirelessly to bring this reception to fruition. She even provided the attendees with a sampling of Thunder Bay's fantastic food.

The provincial council's president, Shari Guinta, was also in attendance, and this July she'll be succeeded by the current president-elect, Marlene Pavletic, who is also from Thunder Bay.

The Ontario Provincial Council of the Catholic Women's League is a grassroots organization of 55,000 members from every part of the province. The Catholic Women's League represents every walk of life and virtually every ethnic and cultural group in Ontario. They work very hard from the local diocesan level on up to create what I describe as the social fabric of our communities: those ideas and activities that bind us together and provide a collective community compass.

Many thanks to the ministers of our government who took the time to meet with the Ontario provincial council members, and thank you to all the members from all the parties who were able to make it to the reception. Again, a special thanks to Shari Guinta, Ann Jacobs, Anne Madden and Pauline Krupa. Your event was a great success, and it's my hope that this event will become an annual fixture at Queen's Park.

#### ONTARIO FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Last month, I was pleased to welcome Carol Mitchell, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, to Guelph to announce an exciting new initiative that will promote the use of Ontario food in our broader public sector institutions. The greenbelt fund, in co-operation with Ontario farmers and food distributors, is administering funding from the Ontario government that will assist hospitals, long-term-care facilities and other broader public sector institutions to offer more Ontario food.

Minister Mitchell and I visited St. Joseph's Health Centre in Guelph, where they have created space to develop their own salads and hot dishes made with good Ontario foods—and they had some scrumptious Ontario apple pie there that they'd made, too.

After introducing these menu changes, the satisfaction rate with food service has climbed to 87% amongst St. Joe's patients, residents, their families and cafeteria patrons.

The commitment to making small changes and understanding their preparation and processing needs is helping St. Joe's change their procurement practices and serve more Ontario food to their clients. Growing the supply of Ontario food in public institutions demonstrates our government's commitment to our agri-food industry and well-being of patients and residents. Congratulations, St. Joe's.

#### MARIA LUIGINA GRIMALDI

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Today, as we celebrate International Women's Day, I wish to pay special tribute to an incredible woman, my aunt Maria Luigina Grimaldi, who turns 106 years old today. Yes, 106 candles on her birthday cake. Can you imagine?

Luigina Grimaldi was born in San Marco in Lamis in Italy, Foggia, in 1905. She followed her husband, Gabrielle Grimaldi, to Canada in 1928, where they raised six children and started one of Canada's first Italian-Canadian travel agencies, which also acted as a post office and also sold sheet music and records and provided notary services. It was called Homeland Travel and was located on Bellwoods Avenue near Mansfield in the heart of Toronto's Little Italy.

Zia Luigina was an amazing lady who loved to cook, clean and support her friends, family and community. She never complained, nor did she ever take any days off. I can never recall her ever being sick or in the hospital until a couple of years ago. When she was 103, they equipped her with a pacemaker. A true Canadian woman pioneer and a true role model, to this day she still lives at home with her 80-year-old daughter, Jean Bartolini.

Luigina was also honoured with the Queen's Jubilee Medal.

Luigina celebrates her six children, 19 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

Buon compleanno, carissima Zia.

As her good friend Johnny Lombardi would say:

*Remarks in Italian.*

Happy birthday.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### 1314596 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2011

Mr. Kormos moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr36, An Act to revive 1314596 Ontario Inc.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

##### JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FEMME

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in recognition of International Women's Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed. Minister responsible for women's issues.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I rise today in recognition of International Women's Day; in fact, the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

Je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour souligner la Journée internationale de la femme.

International Women's Day is a time to commemorate women who have impacted us, guided us and supported

us throughout our lives. Each year, the United Nations chooses a theme to commemorate the day. Ontario joins the world in celebrating women and championing this year's theme, "Equal access to education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women."

Equality and education: two keys to success. Even though gender inequality is rooted in attitudes and beliefs that devalue women and restrict their achievements, we know that education can help remove these barriers and empower women. As former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan once said, "It is impossible to realize our goals while discriminating against half the human race. As study after study has taught us, there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women." Education provides women with skills and knowledge, it boosts self-confidence and it has the ability to set women on a path of self-sufficiency and economic independence.

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Aujourd'hui, la majeure partie des diplômés universitaires de l'Ontario sont des femmes. Malgré cela, Statistique Canada précise que l'emploi des femmes reste concentré dans les secteurs des services traditionnels comme l'éducation, les ressources humaines, la santé et les services sociaux.

Today, the majority of Ontario's university graduates are women. Despite this, Statistics Canada reports that women's employment remains concentrated in traditional service sectors such as education, human resources, health and social services. To ensure equality to access the best-paying jobs and to boost Ontario's competitiveness, we need women in every sector and at every level.

There is good news, though: The number of women registered in apprenticeship programs has risen, with women now representing 28% of new apprentices in the major skilled trades. That being said, there is still room for growth. The new Ontario College of Trades, established in 2010, will encourage more female workers in the trades.

Our government continues to help low-income women gain entry to non-traditional jobs through our women in skilled trades and information technology training programs. We are also helping women who have been laid off to retrain for new, in-demand jobs through our Second Career program.

Par le biais de notre programme Deuxième carrière, nous aidons en outre les femmes qui ont été licenciées à suivre d'autres formations pour qu'elles accèdent aux nouveaux emplois qui sont en forte demande.

Globalement, grâce à ces programmes, nous avons soutenu des milliers de femmes en les aidant à accéder à de bons emplois et à une véritable autonomie financière.

In all, we have supported thousands of women in these programs, helping them gain access to good jobs and economic independence. But economic independence for women cannot be fully realized if those same women are not safe. Just last week, our government introduced an

Ontario sexual violence action plan to better protect women through investments in education, training and awareness programs. This plan builds on the success of our domestic violence action plan by improving supports for survivors and investing in public education to prevent sexual violence from occurring.

We want all of Ontario's women and girls to exercise their full potential, to have equal access to the jobs of the future and to be safe in their homes, workplaces and communities.

En nous réunissant aujourd'hui pour célébrer la Journée internationale de la femme, nous montrons que nous soutenons les femmes chaque jour.

While we stand today to mark International Women's Day, as Ontarians we must stand for women every day.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Today I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus and recognize the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

Although it was officially established by the United Nations in 1977, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the very first International Women's Day. This day was first marked in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland on March 19, 1911. On that day, more than one million people in those countries, both male and female, rallied for the right of women to work, vote, be trained, hold public office and live free of discrimination. One hundred years later, this day is an occasion for people in Canada and many other countries throughout the world to recognize a remarkable century of change and inspiring progress towards equality between women and men.

However, it is also a day to remember that millions of women throughout the world are still treated as second-class citizens and do not have the opportunities, respect and security that they deserve.

I'd like to briefly touch on a few of the successes we have achieved in Canada. The current government in Ottawa has the highest percentage of women in cabinet in Canadian history. Women currently comprise the majority of full-time students in most university faculties. The labour force participation rate of working-age women has risen from 68.2% to 74.3% over the past decade. In 2007, women made up 35% of all self-employed individuals. There has also been an increase in the share of women who are working in managerial positions. In 2006, 73% of all women with children less than age 16 living at home were part of the employed workforce, up from 39% in 1976. In 2003, 29% of married women served as primary income earners for their households. This is up from 11% in the late 1960s.

The United Nations' theme for this year is "Equal access to education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women." Canada's theme is "Girls' rights matter." These themes are related in that they are both focused on empowering women through equal and equitable access to such fundamental human rights as access to education and training.

In Canada, we have made tremendous strides in this area as the majority of university graduates are now

women. We also know that women constitute a majority in graduate schools throughout Ontario and Canada, and we know that they are entering fields such as medicine, law and business in growing numbers, and opening their own small businesses and prospering.

However, I come back to the fact that despite the accomplishments, women do remain under-represented in corporate boardrooms as well as in provincial and federal politics.

Although these statistics and progress in many countries over 100 years are encouraging, we know that in some countries of the world, women and girls face enormous obstacles, hardships and engrained prejudices. Many of them, such as the girls in Afghanistan, are denied access to education. Other women and girls live in countries where, during time of war or political unrest, they become the victims of rape. We have seen the statistics during the Bosnian War, the Rwandan genocide, the civil war in the Congo and the aftermath of the Haitian earthquake. Thus, although this is a day for celebration about the progress women have made, we recognize that there is much more that needs to be done if all women are to be respected, feel safe and have a political voice.

I want to conclude by congratulating all the female trailblazers for their dedication and commitment to advancing women's rights and equality. It is because of their determination and hard work that our younger generation will be better positioned to achieve their hopes and their dreams.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm very proud on behalf of New Democrats to say a few words about the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. Around the world, this is our moment to celebrate how far we have come as women, but also to acknowledge the challenges that still exist for women today.

I spent time yesterday morning over breakfast—we had a wonderful breakfast with hundreds of women in the room, as well as some men, and I got to recognize 12 remarkable women who joined the Ontario cabinet back in 1990. These particular women helped shape history and they're still making history today in the work that they're doing in their communities, with not-for-profit organizations and in all kinds of different areas. They are Zanana Akande, Marion Boyd, Jenny Carter, Evelyn Gigantes, Ruth Grier, Frances Lankin, Shelley Martel, Anne Swarbrick, Shelley Wark-Martyn, Elaine Ziemba, Irene Mathysen and Marilyn Churley.

One of the things that we talked about yesterday morning at our breakfast was that it's not just a matter of getting elected—certainly, that is an important step; that's a step that has to be taken—but it's a matter of what you do once you're elected that really makes the difference and where women can really have an impact.

Those women had a real record of accomplishments when they sat in that cabinet: 10,000 child care spaces were created, they had a regime of employment equity that they could call their own and they were proud of, midwifery was recognized for the first time as a legal profession and thousands upon thousands of not-for-

profit housing units were built in this province to house women and their children, as well as other low-income people.

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What we need to do, then, is stand on the shoulders of these women who have brought forward such accomplishments here in the province of Ontario—and those are only a few of them; yesterday, my list was much, much longer, but in the interest of time, I've truncated it for this conversation. But standing on the shoulders of these women is exactly what we need to do.

When I think about my own son and the young women that go to school with him and attend classes every day, I know that he has no idea, that they can't even fathom or imagine what things were like 20 years ago, just as I found it hard to grasp the idea that, back 100 years ago in 1911, women did not have the vote in this province. Women were not even regarded as persons under the law 100 years ago.

Throughout Canada's history there are stories of courageous women who led the struggle on many, many fronts. They led the struggle for voting rights, for reproductive rights, for child care, for employment equity, for peace and disarmament. These are some of the fronts that women have been charging for many, many years in our history. Women's accomplishments have actually inspired me, as a woman, and I think the women around this room would agree that the accomplishments of other women have been our inspiration.

My mom herself didn't have a career per se—I'm from a working-class family. She had a job. She had to take a job for a while because we had four kids in the family, and things were quite financially tight for us. So she went out and did cleaning in schools, for example. That was one of the jobs she took to help our household get by.

I can remember myself as a young woman and some of the jobs that I took to try to get myself through university, to try to make it in the working world at the very, very beginning of my career. I did everything from slinging beer in taverns—my friend from Welland, I'm sure, would like to know about that story. But I did that for about 10 years when I was getting myself through the end of high school and into university.

I spent time at a dry cleaning factory, in a very toxic environment, trying to make a little bit more money because, of course, waitressing was not very lucrative, and many other kinds of low-paid jobs.

The bottom line is, we know that women still have very, very low-paid work. We talked about that in question period, and of course it is a big issue.

Today, 10% of the population takes home 40% of the income that's earned in Canada. Canada's top CEOs made more by 2:30 p.m. on their very first day of work than the average Canadian makes all year long. It won't be a surprise to anyone to know that those 100 top CEOs are not a majority of women. In fact, we're shut out of the top 40 altogether.

But there are a lot of women in the other ranks—the ranks of minimum-wage earners, and those women are struggling below the poverty line.

We know that we need more child care spaces. We know we need a better minimum wage. We know we need all kinds of supports for women to make sure that they actually achieve the equality they should have achieved many, many years ago.

Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I'm proud to be a woman on International Women's Day.

## PETITIONS

### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition on this special day of International Women's Day. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty" will do the following:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends,

"—increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts" to health care and, specifically, to pharmacists.

I'm pleased to sign it, support it and present it to Braden, Jeff Leal's son.

### OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine's watershed covers close to 20,000 square kilometres and provides water for 65 rivers and creeks. In turn, it provides clean, fresh water for millions of people. The water taken from areas adjacent to the moraine and on natural core can drastically affect water levels in the moraine itself and even deplete an entire area of it.

"Be it resolved:

"First, that clean water should be declared a human right for all people of Ontario;

"Second, that townships, municipalities, counties and cities be prohibited from taking water off the Oak Ridges moraine to supply new development;

"Third, that there be no development of any sort in Ontario without a clean, sustainable water supply for all existing residents, either rural- or community-based, and for food-producing farms before potential future developments be considered;

"Fourth, that there be a minimum of a two-kilometre buffer zone put around the Oak Ridges moraine to prevent development and local government from drilling a well directly on or beside the moraine to find water for new development, thus allowing the groundwater to disperse uninterrupted;

"Fifth, that the sewage from said development not be allowed to be laid down within the Oak Ridges moraine's boundary or within the buffer zone, to prevent the contamination of the water coming off the Oak Ridges moraine going to municipal and private wells and watersheds;

"Sixth, that the people of Ontario request that there be no grandfathering clause for any development, in order to protect the integrity of the Oak Ridges moraine and other water-sensitive regions; and

"Last, that a moratorium be put in place now to prevent further destruction of the Oak Ridges moraine until legislation pertaining to the moraine is resolved."

It is signed by literally hundreds of people, and I would affix my signature thereto.

### PARAMEDICS

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** This petition has been signed by 627 students and teachers at Strathroy District Collegiate Institute in Strathroy, in memory of a former student.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in serving Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to thank the Food for All Food Bank in Prescott for providing me with this petition. I know they also have locations in Cardinal and they just opened another food bank in Spencerville.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario's economy and deserves investment;

"Whereas PC MPP Bob Bailey has introduced a significant tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural goods to food banks, helping farmers, food banks and people in need;

"Whereas over 25 million pounds of fresh produce is disposed of or plowed back into Ontario's fields each year while food banks across Ontario struggle to feed those in need;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call MPP Bob Bailey's private member's bill, Bill 78, the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, to committee immediately for consideration and then on to third reading and implementation without delay."

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Benjamin.

### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, District 27; it's based out of Kingston.

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: on average, 97% of collective agreements are negotiated without work disruption; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

"Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

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"Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Michael to take it to the Clerk.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas all Ontarians have the right to a safe home environment; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario works to reduce all barriers in place that prevent victims of domestic violence from fleeing abusive situations; and

"Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act does not take into consideration the special circumstances facing a tenant who is suffering from abuse; and

"Whereas those that live in fear for their personal safety and that of their children should not be financially penalized for the early termination of their residential leases;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Bill 53, the Escaping Domestic Violence Act, 2010, be adopted so that victims of domestic violence be afforded a mechanism for the early termination of their lease to allow them to leave an abusive relationship and find a safe place for themselves and their children to call home."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it to the table via page Alexandra.

### RURAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** A petition to save Duntroon Central Public School and all other rural schools in Clearview township. I want to thank Ms. Maureen Miller for sending it to me.

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the framework of rural schools is different from urban schools, and therefore they deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep rural schools open in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

### TRAVAILLEURS SUPPLÉANTS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'ai une pétition de Valérie Laurin de l'école intermédiaire de Hanmer et de l'École secondaire Hanmer :

« Attendu que les grèves et les lock-out sont rares; en moyenne, 97 % des conventions collectives sont négociées sans arrêt de travail; et

« Attendu que des lois contre le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs existent au Québec depuis 1978 et en Colombie-Britannique depuis 1993, et les gouvernements successifs de ces deux provinces n'ont jamais abrogé ces lois; et

« Attendu que la loi contre le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs a réduit la longueur et la discorde des conflits du travail; et

« Attendu que le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs pendant une grève ou un lock-out compromet le tissu social d'une communauté à court et à long terme ainsi que le bien-être de ses résidents;

« Par conséquent, nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'adopter une loi interdisant le remplacement temporaire de travailleurs pendant une grève ou un lock-out. »

J'appuie cette pétition et je vais demander à Beau de l'amener au greffier.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I rise today with a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario's economy and deserves investment;

"Whereas PC MPP Bob Bailey has introduced a significant tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural goods to food banks, helping farmers, food banks and people in need; and

"Whereas over 25 million pounds of fresh produce is disposed of or plowed back into Ontario's fields each year while food banks across Ontario struggle to feed those in need;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call MPP Bob Bailey's private member's bill, Bill 78, the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, to committee immediately for consideration and then on to third reading and implementation without delay."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and will send it down with Benjamin.

#### ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** A petition for Elmvale District High School.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

"Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational requirements and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area."

I agree with this petition, and I will sign it.

#### HIGHWAY 15

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the point that Highway 15 intersects with County Road 42 has been considered by many to be a hazardous intersection, particularly when local residents travel over the provincial highway; and

"Whereas in 2007 the Ministry of Transportation staff presented design plans which showed a dramatic reduction in the curvature of this portion of Highway 15, which would have considerably improved the level of visibility and safety to our residents crossing over Highway 15; and

"Whereas in late 2008/early 2009, the Ministry of Transportation revised the 2007 design plans for this intersection, which would only minimally improve the visibility and safety of this intersection but would result in a significant reduction in the amount of funds expended by the province of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Transportation be respectfully requested to direct staff to recommend the 2007 design plan for the intersection of Highway 15 and County Road 42."

I'm pleased to affix my name to this petition and send it to the table with page Hailey.

#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

"Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government agree to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment, also known as liberation therapy, to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis."

I will sign this petition, and I agree with it.

#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I would like to thank Amy Preston for her advocacy on this petition. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

"Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health agrees to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis."

I'll affix my signature and send it to the table with page Braden.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### ONTARIO FOREST TENURE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2011

##### LOI DE 2011 SUR LA MODERNISATION DU RÉGIME DE TENURE FORESTIÈRE EN ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 7, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994 / *Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur la modernisation du régime de tenure forestière en Ontario et modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur la durabilité des forêts de la Couronne.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to join in the debate on Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994.

I read with interest the minister's announcement. I have to admit I spent a good portion of last evening reading the debate from Hansard, some of the speeches that the minister made and also from our perspective, those by our critic the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox

and Addington. I believe he actually shared some of his time with the member for Haldimand-Norfolk. I also was especially interested in reading some of the comments from some of the New Democrats: Mr. Hampton, the member for Kenora-Rainy River, and also Mr. Bisson, from Timmins-James Bay. I found some of the banter between the parties extremely interesting.

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The one thing—and I believe it was our critic Mr. Hillier, from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, who said it—that really resonated with me was the fact that, in so many respects, this bill lacks substance. It has put a lot of its faith in the regulations, and I know that many folks on this side of the House are quite concerned about that.

We know from some of the comments—and I believe it was the member for Haldimand-Norfolk who talked about the review that started in 2009. The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry initiated the forest tenure review. I don't think anyone was averse to that. The current system has served Ontario for many years, and I think that there were many in the industry that looked towards the review as something very positive.

As the review began, I think there was some skepticism; certainly there was a feeling—and I believe, as I read some of the comments yesterday—that some of the outcomes had been predetermined. I was worried about that, because I remember being on the general government committee when Bill 191, the Far North Act, had been brought forward. I can remember when we got to the second reading approval, it was referred to the general government committee, of which I'm a member, and we were to have hearings up in the Far North. I can remember the excitement from some of the members in my caucus about that tour, and being a relatively new member, people do get subbed in for committees. So there was a real excitement about travelling to the Far North to talk about Bill 191.

Then when those June hearings were cancelled, and we came back and did the bill and went through that process at committee—which, for those who don't know, was quite a quick process. The government, obviously, has the majority on the committee. There was a lot of frustration from those people in the north who made deputations, who came to Toronto to meet in the committee hearings.

I think it was perhaps Mr. Bisson, from Timmins-James Bay, who expressed concern about the time frame that the government has for Bill 151 and just what the real legislative time frame is. There's lots of speculation that we won't sit until our legislative calendar ends in June. I think there were a number of members who mentioned or hinted that they were worried about what exactly the legislative time frame was for Bill 151. So I hope at some point, we do get some clarification from the government on how they proceed to move things forward.

Again, our critic, Mr. Hillier, talked about the lack of substance in the bill. But also, I think one of the points that I want to bring up today as part of our debate is the overwhelming powers that the minister has under this act. I think it was the issue about revoking sustainable forest licences, or SFLs. I understand the present system can be somewhat complicated and a bit bureaucratic to do, even when a company wants to get rid of a licence. However, section 41.2, the way I read it, in the document gives the minister sweeping powers to revoke with, I don't believe, any recourse or compensation.

What we don't have in this bill is how the process is going to take place. There seems to be no discussion about process of revocation, no criteria. There's a lot of uncertainty. You look at some of our other systems that we have in place here in the province of Ontario—there's a system to revoke a driver's licence. It's quite clear. There's no system in this bill on how these SFLs would be revoked, and I guess that goes back to something that the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington said: There's tonnes of powers that the minister has under this.

I appreciate that he is here, so I do want to mention a project in my riding that he's well aware of that, although it may not directly relate to this bill, has the future of the forestry industry in mind, and that's the Ontario East Wood Centre and Eco-Industrial Park, located in the township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal. It is an industrial park which is adjacent to the port of Prescott, the only deepwater port between Montreal and Toronto. The Ontario East Wood Centre began their deliberations in 2004. For the masses who are watching at home or who follow Hansard, they can be reached online at [www.woodcentre.ca](http://www.woodcentre.ca).

I also want to make a special mention of the founding director, former Prescott mayor Sandra Lawn, who sits on the 18-person board of directors that includes representation from industry, municipalities, universities, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and retired federal and provincial government managers.

Their efforts to find new opportunities in the wake of the devastating economic impact the pulp and paper industry's collapse has had on many communities, not just in the north but certainly in eastern Ontario—the pulp mill in Cornwall, Domtar, was shut down. That's the example that we use locally in eastern Ontario.

The point I'd like to make is that there are more than one million metric tonnes of pulp wood feedstock available in the Ottawa Valley alone to support the initiative we are trying in Edwardsburgh/Cardinal. The project would help rebuild the forest industry and rural economies in the region by creating new uses for lower-value wood in eastern Ontario. There are over 70 different species of wood available within a short distance of that project, including maple, oak, eastern white pine, birch, basswood and ash.

The idea to create what they call a "wood-based bioeconomy" recognizes that processing opportunities can increase the value of wood products by six times.

Their vision is to look at new economic opportunities by utilizing forestry resources in new ways that are rapidly being developed. I want to commend them because they've worked extremely hard.

I know that they've met with the minister recently. Certainly, they've met with a lot of folks. I'll get to some of the ministries that they've dropped packages off at.

Their plan, quite ambitiously, is to create an eco-industrial park with a cluster of industrial, commercial and scientific research projects based on forest and biomass products. The products could include solid-wood building components, fibres, pharmaceuticals, biochemicals and bioenergy.

The research component is, in their opinion—and I think it's shared amongst many in Leeds-Grenville—a real key and has a huge spinoff potential in attracting the best and the brightest researchers to live and work within Leeds-Grenville and some of the surrounding areas. Locating the research facility and the industrial-commercial component together enhances the level of co-operation between the two sectors. The result is a dynamic that allows very innovative products to be tested outside of the lab in a manufacturing setting and dramatically shortens the gap between getting that good idea into a marketable product.

The project has done great things and they certainly have moved forward.

However, there's one point that I'd like to make. They've met with many folks—the minister. They've provided packages to a whole host of ministries, including OMAFRA, MOE, MNR, Research and Innovation, Economic Development and Trade, Municipal Affairs, Energy, and Infrastructure. They've met with some of the neighbouring MPPs, people like Jim Brownell, who is next door in Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. Could you imagine having to promote this program through a whole host of ministries and a wide range of supporters? They've got great support. They've received \$130,000 from the federal government through its eastern Ontario development program. But could you imagine their frustration if they had to deal with another level of bureaucracy?

**1600**

I think it was the member for Lanark who talked about the local forest management corporations, or LFMCS, that are being set up under this legislation. He used the words "tree LHINs" or "forest LHINs." I look at this project in my own communities and I would think they'd be extremely frustrated if they had another level of bureaucracy between them and the ministry. This project in my communities has really worked hard to get their message out, because it's a unique process. But can you imagine if they had to deal with a level of political cover? I'm sure they would be frustrated.

The debate that I listened to and read about yesterday talked about the tree LHINs or the forest LHINs and the fact that this would be another level of bureaucracy—and I know, in eastern Ontario, what our experience has been with the local health groups, the LHINs; the unelected,

unaccountable and largely anonymous bodies. There has been a lot of frustration with some of the health care groups in my riding because they have to deal with these LHINs and they don't seem to get anywhere.

When you look at creating efficiencies, I'd like to hear how these unelected, unaccountable bodies are going to do anything else but provide cover for the minister. I think that concern is shared amongst many. When you look at the amount of agencies, boards and commissions that have been established or, in this case, will be established, I just can't see how it's going to help attract new investment with a level of political cover. It just doesn't make sense to me.

The other thing that I found very interesting in the discussion yesterday was some of the comments—and again it was some of the New Democrats who brought forward access to markets. I think it was the member for Kenora–Rainy River who talked about his concern about mills from the United States coming in and having access. I believe it was Mr. Bisson from Timmins–James Bay who expressed concern about Quebec sawmills. He mentioned some communities—Cochrane, Timiskaming, Kapuskasing, Smooth Rock Falls, Iroquois Falls and North Bay—worried about lumber being taken from those areas into Quebec.

Again, as part of this debate, I think it's very important that the government lays out its legislative time frame for Bill 151. I know I share the concerns of the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington about the creation of this other level of bureaucracy. I share his concern about the minister having wide-ranging powers under this act without any criteria being present in this bill. I look at my own communities and the innovation of projects like the East Ontario Wood Centre. These people have been working on this project for six years, and I would be furious, as a volunteer on a corporation like that, if I had to deal with a new piece of legislation that threw up roadblocks, threw up political cover and provided a shell of a bill without any substance or criteria being laid out.

I just think there are a number of questions, and I would hope, when it came to the questions and comments section, that members of the government would try to put some meat on the bones, because I don't know what criteria are there. I think it was the member for Lanark who talked about taking a stick from the forest. I don't know why we're leaving everything to regulations. We've got binders and binders of regulation laid out right now, and I think what we need to do is we need to go back, we need to listen to some of the comments that were made yesterday and that I hope will be made today about the way this has been set up. I look forward to hearing some of the further debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I must say that I had never made the connection in my mind between the local health integration networks, which look after health care services in our community, and the new Ontario Forest

Tenure Modernization Act, but I guess now that he speaks about it, we could see where the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences, where the new co-op, where the local forest management corporations could take on kind of the form of what we're now seeing in LHINs. It hadn't come to my mind till he mentioned it, but now I can see how the parallel could be drawn. I would tend to agree with the member that nothing good would come of that.

Like in a lot of legislation that this government has brought forward, there are broad strokes, but on the fundamental questions that could allow me as a politician to make an informed decision as to whether we should support this or not, we're not going to see this till it is in regulation. This is something, again, that we share with what the member has just said. This bill could make drastic changes to the way that wood is allocated in Ontario, yet some very troubling pieces of that bill, we won't get to see. It will be dealt with at the ministry level, in regulation. To us, it could make or break whether we support this legislation.

Some interesting parallels. I hadn't thought about them, but they were interesting to listen to.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I want to thank the member for Leeds–Grenville for his comments. They were very respectfully delivered, and I appreciate the thoughts.

I think you need to understand that, with the local forest management corporations, to make those kinds of comparisons is odd in light of the fact that one of the concerns that had been expressed across the province—certainly across the province where there are forestry opportunities—is the fact that there is a greater desire on the part of communities and aboriginal communities to have an influence over decisions made on how the wood can be harvested. That's one of the goals that we have with the local forest management corporations. Again, I think it's important to understand that we're talking about setting up one or two of them as pilots, to test the principles of our model.

That brings me back to the original part of the remarks that you made, which really were about the fact that this is a process where we've had a significant amount of consultation. We put forward a draft proposal, and then went back and spoke to industry, spoke to new entrants, spoke to communities and made some significant adjustments as a result of the concerns that they expressed, which is why the model of the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licence is one that industry itself is supporting and looking forward to working closely on. There are some tremendous opportunities in that.

As for the issue related to the so-called powers, I think it's important to know that this is something we want to put in place to make sure that our wood is actually harvested in terms of what's on the ground. We hope we don't need to use it; we want to basically engage with our licence holders to try and make sure they are indeed using the wood in an optimal way.

Again, I understand the role that you play—you're in opposition—and I understand the role my critic plays, but the fact is, I think it's being misunderstood.

As for the Ontario East Wood Centre, I know them well and have a lot of admiration for the work they're doing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's a pleasure to be able to be here to comment on the member from Leeds–Grenville's comments on this bill, and it is nice to see the minister here listening to this debate. So often that is not the case with this Liberal government, a minister actually being engaged.

But I will say this: The minister said that he hopes never to use these extraordinary powers that he's granting himself in this legislation. Even the other day he said that he would never exercise those powers. But I have seen it time and time again with this Liberal government: Once they grant themselves authorities and powers, the only reason they do that is so that they will use them. That is unequivocal. We've seen it time and time again. If they did not want those powers, if they did not want to use them, if they felt that they were not correct, they wouldn't put them in the bill. I really call on the minister: He already has sufficient authority to cancel licences and to revoke allocations, and he should stick with that criteria that is established.

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We'll deal with the forestry LHINs a little bit later on throughout this discussion, but those forestry LHINs, that's all it is: another layer, a thickening layer between the forestry industry and the minister who controls the wood allocations in this province, a thickening and an obstruction between industry and government. What we need to be doing is tearing down those barriers and removing those thickening layers so that industry and government can actually work together to get a more productive industry. But this government—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I, too, am glad to see the ministers here for this discussion. A few years ago I was very concerned about the—I actually lobbied here for the Steelworkers from Kenora. The two mills in Kenora were under the jurisdiction of the United Steelworkers, and they were extremely upset that they were losing their jobs and AbitibiBowater was pulling out. We certainly lobbied and we lost that lobby. The two mills shut in Kenora and the biggest employer in town was the hospital after those two mills shut. I was very concerned about that, and that happened in 11 communities in northern Ontario.

This new bill and what they're doing—I'm wondering, in the wood basket of the area these guys were sitting on their porches watching lumber go down the highway to be developed in Manitoba and Quebec, sitting on their porches, 100 years working in those mills and those wood baskets, watching the logs leave their area and go

and be processed in another province. I don't know what has happened since then. That was a few years ago and I don't know if these wood baskets are going to remain in the community and start those mills up in the community again, because there are certainly a lot of communities in northern Ontario that are suffering because of hydro rates and other things that happened, and this government allowed these mills to shut down. Kenora was just absolutely destroyed. Both the mills were gone and Abitibi-Bowater.

I'll reiterate: The biggest employer in Kenora was the hospital. That's a sad state of affairs. Until they start protecting the wood basket for the people of that area and allow those mills to start up again and process those logs there instead of going to Quebec, where the hydro is one third of the cost, I might add—until this government gets their hydro costs under control, this will continue no matter how much they talk; it's still going to go on.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Leeds–Grenville has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to take this opportunity to thank the member for Nickel Belt, the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, and also my eastern brother, the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington for your comments.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** We're neighbours. We're next door. Absolutely; he's my eastern brother.

I want to comment on some of the things the minister said. I can appreciate he only talked about how maybe they're going to set up one or two of these tree LHINs, but it may be one or two too many, because again I wouldn't want this government to force the failure that is the LHINs in our health care system on to the forestry sector.

I believe that he said he hopes that he doesn't have to use these extraordinary powers that he receives under the act, but still, we're dealing with a shell of a bill that doesn't have the meat on the bone to deal with some of these details, because the minister can cancel agreements, revoke licences and commitments; no issue of compensation. These 12-person tree LHINs, as I call them, have no accountability.

I can appreciate some of the comments today, and I do appreciate the minister being here and providing some comments. I hope that I've also given a local example of an innovative group in my own riding in the east that is looking at innovative ways to deal with the forestry sector, the fact that they have to deal with multiple ministries now because of the nature of their business.

I look forward to continuing to be in the debate this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to add my few cents to Bill 151, the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act—I have a hard time with this word.

Basically, the act will bring two new components to forestry the way we know it. You have to realize that forestry is huge in Ontario. The crown, the province, owns 90% of our forested area, which represents 66% of Ontario. It is a huge potential. It is a huge natural resource that belongs to the people of Ontario, for the people of Ontario to create wealth, which I hope we will be able to share. Given that a lot of those hectares, 70.4 million of them to be precise, are located in northern Ontario, it is something that is near and dear to me.

The two new components are, first, the local forest management corporations; people have taken to calling them LFMCS. Basically, they are government agencies that manage the crown forest and oversee the competitive sale of timber in a given area.

A second new component is the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences, which are groups of mills and harvesters that collectively form a new company to manage crown forests under the sustained forest licences that are issued to them. The minister was in the House explaining to us that they intend to have two pilot projects on this.

I have concerns with the bill. There is no mechanism for changing stumpage prices. I'm really concerned that companies will have to pay more for wood. That would be devastating to a lot of companies that exist in northern Ontario. I say it would be devastating, and the word is not too strong.

Let me read you the list of forestry employers that have either ceased to exist or have laid off a substantial part of their workforce.

I'll start with Cascades in Thunder Bay, 375 permanent jobs lost; Abitibi-Consolidated in Kenora, which my friend from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek was talking about, 350 permanent jobs lost; Norampac, the containerboard in Red Rock, 300 permanent jobs lost; Columbia Forest Products, a veneer plant in Rutherglen, 63 permanent jobs lost; Columbia Forest Products, OSB mill in Hearst, 76 permanent jobs lost; Tembec, the sawmill in Timmins, 100 jobs on indefinite layoff. Those people don't know if and when they will ever have a job again.

Weyerhaeuser, one paper machine and the wood room in Dryden closed, 115 permanent jobs lost; Weyerhaeuser sawmill in Dryden, 385 permanent jobs lost; Weyerhaeuser in Sturgeon Falls, not far from me, 125 permanent jobs lost; Excel sawmill in Opasatika, 78 permanent jobs lost.

We have Domtar, the sawmill in Chapleau, 67 permanent jobs lost; Bowater—that's the newsprint in Thunder Bay—100 permanent jobs lost; Bowater, the kraft pulp, also in Thunder Bay, 250 permanent jobs lost; Smurfit-Stone, containerboard in Thunder Bay, 100 permanent jobs lost; Temagami Forest Products in Temagami, 55 permanent jobs lost; Tembec in Smooth Rock Falls, 230 permanent jobs lost; Tembec in Mattawa, 111—they are temporary layoffs, but it has been a long time since those people have been to work; Tembec in Kapuskasing, 65 permanent jobs lost; Kruger, or Longlac Wood Indus-

tries, in Longlac, 350 permanent jobs lost; Domtar pulp and paper in Espanola, 115 permanent jobs lost—the mill is still operating; Domtar sawmill in Nairn Centre, 140 permanent jobs lost; Devlin sawmill in Kenora, 30 permanent jobs lost; Patricia Logging in Dryden, 35 permanent jobs lost; Sturgeon Timber, in Sturgeon Falls, 70 permanent jobs lost; Weyerhaeuser, the iLevel plant in Kenora, 41 permanent jobs lost; Bowater sawmill in Ignace, 45—those workers are on indefinite layoff, and for them, too, it has been a long time since they've been at work; Bowater in Thunder Bay, 157 permanent jobs lost; Abitibi-Consolidated in Thunder Bay, 344 on indefinite layoff.

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We could talk about Atikokan Forest Products, or McKenzie Forest Products, in Hudson, 150 jobs lost; Marathon Pulp, in Marathon; Dubreuilville, Nakina—the list goes on and on.

I wanted to give everybody here a flavour as to what this means. Every one of those little towns in northern Ontario has been devastated. Some of them have had the guts ripped right out of them because the mill, the woodworkers, the forestry industry, was their main industry. That was the bread and butter of their community. This is what created the wealth in their community. That meant that the pizza shop—there is no Pizza Hut—would work, the hairdresser could continue, the grocery store etc. Not only were those workers laid off, but everybody who supplied them: the gas co-op, the guy who sharpened chainsaws, everybody else—the truckers, the mechanics who maintained the equipment. The spinoff effect in each and every one of those communities that I've read to you means tens of thousands of people in northern Ontario have lost their jobs.

Tens of thousands, I guess, doesn't look that bad when you sit in southern Ontario and you hear about 140,000 auto workers losing their jobs. But when you come from a little community like Gogama, with 198 houses, or if you come from a little community like Nairn Centre—I see the representatives from Nairn Centre and Espanola—those blows to the local economy are devastating. The forestry industry needs government help.

So here we have a new bill that will—that may—lead to all of those companies paying more for wood. This is very dangerous. This is not something desirable at all. This is the wrong time to introduce those kinds of uncertainties into a market that looks like what I've just read to you, and I could have kept on reading, because 70 of them have been affected by permanent closure, permanent job losses or indefinite layoffs.

There are concerns that companies across the border, where the price of electricity is lower—yes, I'm talking about electricity again—will come into Ontario. They will have more money to bid on wood, thus driving prices up and forcing more Ontario companies out of business.

I want to talk a little bit about the price of electricity. You're right that the forestry industry is not like a smel-

ter operation in the mines. But they do have electricity bills, and let me tell you, the electricity bills are going up.

If you take a medium-sized sawmill, let's say, in Ontario, you would pay \$491,384 for electricity. If you were located in Manitoba, it would cost you \$237,066 to use the exact same amount of energy. If you were located in Quebec, it would cost you \$259,637. Those differences are huge; they are huge.

When you're a sawmill that has barely made it through the recession, when you're a forestry operator for pulp and paper that is having a hard time making it through the recession and you see the price of electricity, it is something that you have to take into account, because when the forestry industry from outside starts to bid—the paper mills and the sawmills from outside our province will start to bid for our wood—they would have this huge advantage that their cost of electricity will be way cheaper, like I have just read to you. If you are a bigger user, the savings are even bigger. That takes into account all of the savings that are on the table for large energy users.

Those are significant. We had sort of good news/bad news in my riding recently, where Cliffs Natural Resources is a mining consortium that owns a lot of stake in the Ring of Fire to mine chromite. They have put on their website for everybody to see the case for building milling and a refinery that could be in my riding, in Capreol, where the train track is and there is supply of electricity. There certainly is a really skilled workforce because of our years of experience and knowledge. There is the support industry. So Capreol in my riding has been chosen as the case base for value-added jobs in Ontario from the Ring of Fire chromite deposit.

The problem is that if you go on their website, after you see their names and the name of the CEO and all this, the second slide is that there won't be any smelter and mill built in Ontario at the current price of energy. I'm not saying this; Cliffs Natural Resources, which has all the claims in northern Ontario in the Ring of Fire to extract the chromite, are the ones who said it for everybody to see. Go on their website, page 2. There will be none.

Northern Ontario produces some of the cleanest, greenest, cheapest electricity in all of this jurisdiction, but we are not allowed to use this for the prosperity of northern Ontario. We are not allowed to use it for the forestry industry—and this is what I was referring to.

Coming back to the bill, the bill talks about a bidding process for wood. I've already said that other jurisdictions around us, whether from the States, Manitoba or Quebec, will be allowed to bid. We all have to remember NAFTA. Once we put our natural resources up for bid, whoever is the highest bidder will get our wood. Those persons, those industries, those businesses will get our natural resources.

This is very troublesome to me because if you come from Quebec, if you come from Manitoba, if you come from the States, you're not going to have any value-added jobs in northern Ontario, where you harvest this

wood, and we'll continue to see raw logs on huge tractor-trailer trucks on this road that goes nowhere but to Quebec. If you come to my riding or if you go to my friend from Timmins—James Bay's riding and you sit on this highway, you will see the raw logs going by. It is already happening.

1630

I've told you about the 100 layoffs in Timmins, that the mill has shut down. The cutting of trees is still going on, but those trees are not bringing any value added. I want a plan that would allow us to share in prosperity.

We have wonderful natural resources. I've already told you, we in Ontario own 90% of our forests. There are a few people who own beautiful pieces of forest, and good for them, but 90% of the forest belongs to us. It is a natural resource that we should all share in. I don't want people from Quebec, Manitoba or the States—no offence to them—to outbid us on our natural resources, but this is what this bill will do. It has the potential to politicize the allocation of fibre. And no offence to all of my colleagues, including myself, but politicians are not the best people to make those decisions. It's always a little bit scary. It creates uncertainty at a time when the forest industry is in crisis and it does not allow for investment due to this uncertainty.

Let's make no mistake about it, I want the forestry industry to rebound. I know there will be markets for products from the forest now and into the future and forever. But we need to look at this bill very carefully as to what we are doing. Once we put our natural resources, our trees, up for bid to the highest bidder, we have just lost control over one of our dearest natural resources, our forests, our trees, and this brings a lot of uncertainty.

I have sawmills in my riding, like most of the MPPs from the north, that are still hanging on. I'm working really closely with Fryer Forest Products, who has a really tough time making it through this recession, a really tough time accessing credit so that he can invest and be prosperous into the future in the new markets that are opening. But if you bring one more layer of uncertainty into this industry, you have the potential to really do a lot of damage.

I've read to you this afternoon a series of forestry producers, whether it's sawmills or paper and pulp mills, that have closed, that have limited their operations, that have made permanent layoffs. Those are real. Those are people who need our help right here, right now. They are northerners. They are people who have made a living working out of the forest and want to continue to do so.

I, like every NDPer, believe that there is a bright future for forestry. It may not look exactly the way it looked before, but there will continue to be demands for the wood of northern Ontario for many, many years to come. So we need to support the businesses in this industry to make sure that they are ready for the future and to make sure that they make it through this recession that doesn't know when to end.

The same bold action that was afforded to the people of southern Ontario when the auto industry ran into

trouble needs to be available to the people of the north. It needs to be available to the forestry industry so that we can prepare ourselves, so that we can speak with certainty that, yes, there will be a bright future for the forestry industry in northern Ontario—and in all of Ontario, for that matter; there are forests everywhere. The government has to understand this and work in that direction.

But as I said, I have worries about this bill. I have worries that I have laid out regarding other jurisdictions outbidding us, about other jurisdictions driving up the price of wood, about bringing in a level of uncertainty.

You're looking at me intently, as in, I have to wrap up, so I will do this. I thank you for the 20 minutes that was afforded to me. It was a pleasure to add my voice to this debate, and I hope we are able to move on part of this act so that we bring in the certainty that is needed in the industry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I'm pleased to comment on the intervention made by my good friend from my neighbouring riding of Nickel Belt.

You know, she has discussed the difficulties in the northern forest and northern forest industry that have taken place over the last five, six years. She has forgotten to put it in the context of what's going on in the world economy. She has forgotten that the Canadian dollar has appreciated by about 35%, making us about 35%—just on the strength of the dollar alone—less competitive.

**Interjection:** It's 40%.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** My friend says 40%, and that's probably clearer.

She has forgotten that there are 190,000 American forest workers out of work. She has forgotten that the American pulp and paper industry has permanently closed 72 pulp and paper mills, and who knows how many sawmills.

Why did they do that? They didn't do it because of Ontario's forest allocations. They didn't do it because of any great reason other than there was no market for their product. When they had no market for their product, our mills struggled to find markets for theirs, and while southern Ontario managed to provide opportunities in the housing sector in particular for the use of our wood, it is a small part of what Ontario produces.

You know, we have put an offer to the forest industry of over \$1 billion in the past five years. The NDP did not support that money. They did not support the help to the sawmill in Hornepayne. They didn't support the money for Tembec in Chapleau. They didn't support the other investments we've made across the north. I think they are prisoners of their own rhetoric.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I want to compliment the member from Nickel Belt on her knowledge and compassion and shifting it into the debate here on Bill 151. She went through a litany of job losses in her riding. It's quite

disturbing, actually, to have witnessed that and to be a publicly elected person, regardless of your political affiliations, and to have to work with those people and also with a government that doesn't seem to have the same sort of commitment. Even yesterday, we heard some of the pushback, that anything critical that we say is somehow wrong. You even talked about the energy prices of processing other materials, resources from the Ring of Fire, and the electricity prices.

It's not something of a political nature that we're saying; it's that they've simply got it wrong on a couple of fronts. In fact, we had a member yesterday talking about the creation of a company, Atikokan Renewable Fuels, and here's what the mayor of Ignace, Mayor Lee Kennard, said:

"'Ignace still has a skilled work force,' Kennard said. 'We've lost workers who continue to maintain a house in Ignace and a house in Thunder Bay or in other parts of the country. We need the provincial government to make a decision,' says Kennard.

"Despite the recent announcements"—which they were mentioning yesterday; Bill Mauro—"many people in the existing or potential biomass sector are frustrated with how slowly the provincial government is releasing the results of the wood supply competitive process."

They say all the correct things, but the reality is that there are families who have no jobs and no income because of the lack of a policy. Part of that policy they stand up and champion: "How great is our electricity policy." Who wants to pay 34 cents a kilowatt hour for energy—do you understand—when it used to be five or six cents? They're simply on the wrong track. This isn't being said meanspiritedly or maliciously, but Denmark—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you.

The member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank the member from Nickel Belt for her statistics and all the comments about the job losses. This is like an instant replay for me: the erosion of our base industries in this country.

1640

What's going on here is, you've got US Steel in Hamilton, which has now shut out the workers because they want huge concessions, but guess what? Production is going on down in the States; the blast furnaces are running down there, and our blast furnaces are closed. Do you see the comparison here?

The same thing is happening in the north. Abitibi-Bowater went into Kenora and places like that and said, "We want concessions. The hydro is too much. We're going to move to Quebec or Manitoba unless you facilitate us." This government did not facilitate it. They did nothing about the hydro rates, and now they're going to give them 30 bucks a month in northern Ontario for a rebate on their hydro. What is that going to do: keep one light running in the garage? Give me a break.

I can tell you right now that this is an instant replay. Years ago, I was in Ottawa for the Steelworkers, fighting about the erosion of our base industries. Correct me if

I'm wrong: 90% of our forestry, 90% of our mining and 100% of our steel production is foreign-owned. Isn't that special? We have no control over our own economy, we have no control over our base industries, and everyone's wondering why it's falling apart. What do you think the Americans are doing right now? It's called protectionism. They're doing it in steel, they're going to do it in forestry and they're going to do it in manufacturing.

This is just the start of the slide. And you think that by forming another LHIN you're going to protect the forestry business in northern Ontario? I don't think so.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comment?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the member from Nickel Belt for her comments.

Three things that I'll comment on specifically: first of all, the comments about shipping wood out. The Crown Forest Sustainability Act was brought into this Legislature in 1994 under an NDP government. Under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, you could ship wood out then. This doesn't change anything. The restrictions are just as severe to allow that to happen as they were almost 20 years ago in 1994. Nothing has changed in that regard.

When it comes to the bidding on wood, you always could. That hasn't changed either. No change there, but the fearmongering continues. You just have to use it in Ontario—the very same thing.

Number three: abuse of ministerial powers. Guess what? The point of this is to try to get the wood back to work. If you don't want to change it, if you're happy with the status quo, if you want certain companies under their SFLs to be allowed to hoard the wood, then I guess you vote for the status quo. What this would do is allow the minister—and it's rarely going to happen, I'm sure. If a group is found to not be using the wood and creating employment from the use of that wood, why wouldn't you want him to do something about it? Would you want the wood to be sitting there idle on the stump, rotting, and the people not going to work? I thought that was what you were all about.

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek made a comparison between steel and forestry. I'm sorry; it's exactly the opposite. What you described has not happened. You said the capacity on the steel got shipped to America. The capacity in the forest industry did not get shipped to another province. I said that yesterday—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Oh, yes, it does.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Show me where. You're wrong.

To the member from Durham: 34 cents a kilowatt hour? Who is spending 34 cents a kilowatt hour for power, as the member from Durham said? Speaker, please tell him to stand up and tell us where that's happening. Your analogy is completely wrong. I said it yesterday.

That's the difference. When they closed the capacity, it did not get transferred out. That's what shows you that the argument is false.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Nickel Belt has two minutes to respond.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Usually, Tuesday afternoons are not so animated. I don't know what happened.

I'll start with my neighbour from Algoma–Manitoulin and some of his comments. Yes, the recession in the forest industry did not only hit Ontario; I agree with him. But where we differ is that I see a bright future for our forests, for the use of our wood in Ontario. In order for that bright future to see its full potential, it needs support from our government. Part of that is to bring certainty to the system, to the industry, and this bill is not doing this.

The member from Durham called the list a "litany of job losses." I could have gone on way longer. There has been tremendous job loss in the forestry industry in northern Ontario. I happen to keep track of it because this is where I live and those are the people I know. People sort of know that forestry has gone down in northern Ontario, but I wanted to read them to you because each and every one of those communities has been affected, each and every one of those communities is still struggling, and they need their government to help.

The parallel that my neighbour from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek—I can see where you can draw the parallel. We're talking about our natural resources. We're talking about selling them to the highest bidder. We're talking about losing controls. I can see where the parallels are there. Sure, they are two different industries; we're talking about natural resources versus steel, but the parallels still exist. To the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan: Where we differ is, I see a bright future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It's my pleasure to rise for a few minutes to add to this debate about the forest tenure legislation that's before us. I think it's probably worthwhile to listen to the debate here this afternoon. We, in some cases, went a little bit off tenor in certain sections. I think it's best if I just take a moment or so to really talk about what the intent of the legislation is and where we want to go.

Frankly, this came about after an enormous amount of consultation. The majority of the material from the consultation process has really helped us shape this legislation.

This proposed framework is key to building a strong forest economy in Ontario and is needed to create the opportunities that would generate the right level of investment to ensure that the crown forests continue to be renewed and enhanced while creating additional opportunities for jobs and economic prosperity. That's the overlying objective.

Ontario crown forests belong to the people of Ontario and we want to make sure that Ontarians receive the full benefit. The current forest tenure system was designed years ago to give primary consuming mills responsibility to manage Ontario forests in exchange for long-term wood supply, making it difficult for new players to enter the market and leaving communities vulnerable during economic downturns. I think we heard this over and over

again this afternoon, the way the economy has been for the last couple of years.

During consultation, we heard loud and clear that Ontarians wanted change. The status quo that has been there for a number of years frankly has served its purpose. We are in the 21st century and we need to move forward. We also heard that change should be implemented in a measured and cautious manner. Change is difficult at the best of times. We get entrenched in what we did yesterday and the day before, and sometimes even—we recognize that, for the betterment of the community and the betterment of Ontarians, sometimes that kind of change is difficult.

We've listened to the feedback and have developed a proposed tenure model that is widely supported and contains many of the suggestions we heard during the consultation, including more involvement by the local and aboriginal communities. There's no doubt we face some daunting challenges, but I believe that we can revitalize our industry and our communities by restoring prosperity through a new forest economy based on new products, new markets and new processes.

I would also add to that the fact that as the economy rebounds, we have to have this industry ready to face the challenges of tomorrow. What happened yesterday—we heard this over and over again; it's not going to come back as we saw it then, but it's going to have a new face.

We will continue to work with industry and local aboriginal communities and our partner ministry to ensure that the forest sector's needs are addressed in a competent and timely manner. Together we can work to revitalize our industry in our communities and restore prosperity. Together the wood supply competition and tenure modernization are key initiatives in promoting the fullest and most innovative use of Ontario wood.

The Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011, will enable the modernization of Ontario's forest tenure and the pricing system. Modernizing the Ontario forest tenure and pricing system will make help make Ontario's timber supply and prices more responsive to market demand, create new business opportunities for entrepreneurs and facilitate greater local community and aboriginal peoples' participation in this sector. As I mentioned a minute ago, we really need to move to the 21st century within this industry so it doesn't fall any further behind.

**1650**

The bill would enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011, and will amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. This act will enable the incorporation of Ontario local forest management corporations as crown agents by regulation. The act sets out the objects of Ontario local forest management corporations, which would include: holding forest resource licences and managing crown forests in a sustainable manner; providing economic development opportunities for aboriginal people; managing its affairs as a self-sustained business entity and optimizing the value from crown forest resources; and marketing, selling and enabling

access to a predictable and competitively priced supply of crown forest resources.

The act also sets out the general governance structure for Ontario local forest management corporations, including the appointment of a board of directors; the powers of the local forest management corporations; the employment of a general manager and staff; financial matters; reporting requirements; and provisions regarding windup.

The act will permit Ontario local forest management corporations to retain their revenues and will authorize the use of revenues for their jobs. The act will allow the minister to issue directives to Ontario local forest management corporations.

The act will also amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994, to support forest tenure and pricing modernization. The act will make forest resource licensing, forest resource supply agreements and wood supply commitments subject to terms and conditions, as prescribed by regulations. The act will enable the crown to grant a forest resource licence to an Ontario local forest management corporation without competitive processes.

The act will allow a licensee to surrender a forest resource licence subject to terms and conditions set by the minister and permit the imposing of terms and conditions by the minister in respect to a transfer of a forest resource licence. The act will allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the minister, to cancel forest resource licences, supply agreements and commitments on the grounds set out in the act, as may be prescribed by regulations. The act will also effect a limitation on remedies and proceedings and limit the crown liability in circumstances set out. For example, the limitation of liability would apply to the cancellation or amendment of licences, supply agreements and commitments.

There have been a number of questions. Let me just touch on some of those questions to the best of my ability. The NDP has been out criticizing this tenure legislation on the basis that they want to make sure that every party involved is properly consulted and that resources will go to the highest bidder, regardless of whether or not they are in this province. That seems to be their thinking, so let me just explain.

First of all, I'm pleased that our government is proposing to modernize Ontario's tenure and pricing systems so that we can put Ontario wood back to work and continue to build a new forest economy. Together, wood supply competition and tenure modernization are key initiatives in promoting the fullest and most innovative use of Ontario wood. We have listened to the feedback and have developed a proposed tenure model that is widely supported and contains many of the suggestions we heard during consultation, including more involvement by local and aboriginal communities.

This proposed framework is the key to building a strong forest economy in Ontario. It's needed to create opportunities that will generate the right level of investment to ensure that crown forests continue to be renewed and enhanced while creating additional opportunities for

jobs and economic prosperity. This new legislation will modernize the forest tenure and pricing system to allow for greater market mechanisms in the pricing and allocation of crown timber than exists in the current model.

One of the other questions that gets raised in the debate: Why would this bill give the government the authority to cancel existing wood supply agreements and licences on a whim? The ministry will not cancel existing wood supply agreements arbitrarily. This will only be used to make sure that crown forest resources are being managed to put Ontario wood to work. The proposed legislation provides that the cancellation provision can only be used to help the issuance of a forest resource licence to an LFMC and to take wood away from someone who isn't optimally using it. This makes a lot of sense. Somebody holds a licence and they're not delivering on their commitment. Do we want to waste a licence for those precious resources? What this does is allow the minister to shift the licence to somebody who has a plan to move forward.

Use of this power will be done on a case-by-case basis and it will be considered very carefully; I think the minister suggested that just today. Legal assessments will need to be undertaken as part of our consideration to cancel. It's not done on a whim, as one might suggest; it may be based on facts and a lack of commitment from the proponents. At this time, we would hope that we would not need to use this power. We hope that we would be able to engage with licence or commitment-holders to find mutually beneficial solutions. Having this power in legislation would help encourage sector players to co-operate.

I've heard some comparison from previous speakers comparing this to other issues when it comes to the licences that were issued, like the FIT program with the Green Energy Act. We know there have been some proponents in the past that put forward applications, and basically what they did was they tied up a certain portion of the grid for the proposal with no intentions or not knowing exactly when that proponent would come online. That's not fair to legitimate businesses or investments that want to move forward, that they're hampered by somebody just sitting on a licence without taking the opportunity to exercise that commitment.

Another important question that we heard over the debate: Why does the bill allow mills from outside the province to bid against local companies for the wood supply? Provisions in this Crown Forest Sustainability Act make sure that no sale of wood goes to a bidder outside of Ontario unless the bidder can prove that there's not a market for it inside the province. I think that would make a lot of sense. We have some resources that have some value to create jobs, to improve our economy, and if there's no direct market for that particular product, I would suggest that we look for foreign opportunities.

I would relate that to another sector, the automotive sector. Ontario is the largest jurisdiction in North America in the automotive sector. Eighty per cent of our automobiles are sold outside of Ontario. Can you imagine an

automotive industry here in Ontario that virtually only catered to the Ontario market? We would lose about 80% of that market.

Almost all of Ontario wood is kept in this province. Of the very small amount of wood that does go outside the province, this commerce still creates Ontario jobs in the forestry sector.

1700

Let me try to address another question. The question that we heard, once again: What is the purpose of adding yet another crown agency? What is wrong with the current set-up? Let me shed some clarity. There is significant public interest in the management of crown forests, and a crown agency will provide the right balance of government oversight and control by providing enough flexibility to have the LFMC make decisions that are in the best interests of the business while ensuring continued sustainable management of crown forests; provide opportunities to take advantage of new and emerging markets; and enable innovative investment of revenues that will further the objectives of the LFMC and provide benefits to local aboriginal communities. As we know, a lot of forestry activity has a role within our aboriginal communities, and we truly have to respect that and make sure that they are involved.

That leads to the next question that's commonly asked, and that is: Why haven't we put aboriginal involvement and regulations directly into the legislation? We are getting criticism for not including enough in this legislation, like the requirement for aboriginal and local representation on the LFMC boards. If we deem it necessary after consulting with our stakeholders, will it be possible to include this requirement in the regulation? Those are some of the common questions.

As I said in my previous comments, we have listened to the feedback and have developed a proposed tenure model that is widely supported and contains many of the suggestions we've heard during consultations, including more involvement by local and aboriginal communities.

The proposed legislation does set out the objectives of the LFMC. These include providing economic development opportunities for aboriginal people and the recognition of the importance of local economic development. LFMCS will retain revenues from the sale of crown resources and use the money to further that objective. So they'll have a critical role.

As part of our proposal, we will be looking at ways to enhance economic opportunities for aboriginal people and communities. We will continue to engage with these communities. We have also been working with representatives of the Chiefs of Ontario to establish a working group to solicit further input.

I once again wanted to put some type of an overview of the intent of this piece of legislation. There was a enormous amount—as you heard from the minister—of consultation prior to the legislation being drafted. There has been ample debate. Can we make it better? I guess that's what it is at the end of the day.

I want to say that this piece of legislation has regard for everything under the sun. I think it's not quite appropriate—so we're here allowing debate so we can move this forward.

As I mentioned in my earlier remarks, the economy is turning around. The wood industry is a critical part of the turnaround. It's a huge economic driver, not only in northern Ontario. I have the privilege of having a mill in my riding at the mouth of the Trent River, Norampac, which produces a lot of corrugated board. It also uses some of the most innovative technologies to make sure that the plant stays competitive. Although it's a big industry in the north, there is a lot of spinoff from the processed products, even in southern Ontario. So we need to be ready. You've heard that we regained 95% of our jobs lost during the recession—and that's across the board—so we need to make sure that we have the proper processes, the proper ways of helping this very, very important sector of our economy in Ontario, natural resources, not just for now but for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me the time to add my few comments to this very, very important piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to provide some comments on the address by the member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

He started his speech 19 minutes ago and talked about our forests belonging to the people of Ontario. Again, I go back to some of the comments that I made before. This bill is empty. It leaves everything to regulation. The member used the words that the minister used an hour or so ago, "We hope not to use those powers"—"we hope." As we know on this side, the minister has extremely sweeping powers. He can break agreements, revoke licences. There's no issue of compensation.

Again, the member opposite doesn't provide any details, any criteria, any information. He mentions their consultation but, again, doesn't follow it up with any substantive details.

I couldn't believe what I heard when he talked about the tree LHINs, the forestry LHINs, the local forest management corporations, or LFMCS, and when he said that creating them was striking the right balance. I couldn't believe my ears. I can't believe that the member opposite believes that another level of bureaucracy, another agency, board or commission to add to the 600 we already have in the province of Ontario is striking the right balance.

We know the political patronage system that appoints them. We know the history of the government opposite with the local health integration networks, or LHINs. I can't believe that that's the right balance by creating another level of bureaucracy of unelected, unaccountable and anonymous people running the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I have comments here from someone who knows a little bit about the forestry industry, the member from Kenora—Rainy River, Howard Hampton:

"One of the big issues around Thunder Bay just a few years ago was that Abitibi held some private forest land. After they closed a number of their operations in Thunder Bay, they said, 'We don't need this forest land anymore,' and they put it up for bid. Lo and behold, who was the highest bidder but an American company, which now harvests the wood and ships it to a mill in Duluth, Minnesota—forest resources harvested in Ontario, not being used to sustain jobs in Ontario but being used to sustain jobs, good jobs, in and near Duluth, Minnesota."

In his part of Ontario, "which is right along the Minnesota border," he bumps "into American wood buyers all the time. They're up talking to farmers and anybody else who has private wood, private land" for sale. "Are they buying that wood to create a mill and create good jobs in Ontario? No. They want to buy that wood and take it across the border to sustain good jobs in their jurisdictions.

"This government says it wants to promote economic development and jobs in Ontario. Well, let me tell you, from Thunder Bay through Fort Frances to Rainy River, what I can see happening is that all kinds of American mills" are benefiting—"Minnesota-based mills"—and "are coming up and saying, 'We'll bid on this, we'll bid on this and we'll bid on this.' Already having, say, 75% or 80% of their wood supply in Minnesota, they're probably quite willing to bid very high for that marginal 15%, the top 15%, because it's the added 10% or 15%. For them, it's not 50% or 70% of their wood supply; it's just that added 10% or 15%. They're probably willing to bid very high" on that 15% to fill their quotas.

"But what happens out of that process? You'll get a few jobs harvesting the wood, but the good jobs—the pipefitters, the electricians, the welders"—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I listened intently to the remarks from my colleague from Northumberland—Quinte West. He is a gentleman who knows a lot about the forestry industry. People should know that one of the largest forest areas in southern Ontario is the Ganaraska forest, and the member from Northumberland—Quinte West was a strong advocate during the time that he was a councillor in Brighton and mayor of Brighton, and now the member of provincial Parliament for Northumberland—Quinte West. So he knows about the necessity to conserve a forest, the Ganaraska forest, to make sure it's going to be there for future generations and the opportunity to sustain a livelihood and to make sure there's an ample supply in place for future generations.

1710

Secondly, I know of his great work with Norampac. I would invite members of this Legislature, if you have the opportunity, to go to Trenton, Ontario and take the opportunity to visit that rather large mill that Norampac operates in Trenton, Ontario. It's state-of-the-art, through

the good work of the member from Northumberland–Quinte West. I know a number of years ago there was a substantial investment in that mill to bring in state-of-the-art technology in order to have that mill compete in a very competitive world. For example, we've lost the 40% discount that we had a number years ago due to the exchange rate, so it was important for that mill in Trenton to invest in new technology to compete in a world where our currency will be at par or at a premium for the foreseeable future, which has certainly changed the dynamic of the forest industry in Ontario.

Again, this bill that we're debating this afternoon is all part and parcel to bring about the evolution of the forest industry in the province of Ontario, to make sure it's in place—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you.

The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to add a couple of comments to the speech of the member from Northumberland on Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011.

I recently had the pleasure of taking part in pre-budget consultations, and on that tour we did hear from some in the forestry sector. We know the forestry sector has been hit hard the last number of years under the McGuinty government.

While in Timmins, the committee heard from Tammy Mazzetti of Georgia-Pacific. Georgia-Pacific is one of the world's leading manufacturers of tissue, packaging, pulp and paper and building products, and they recently took over the oriented strand board business in Englehart, Ontario. She stated that one of the key factors business needs when they're getting into this business is that they need to know "that the primary inputs of fibre, power and people remain competitive." We've certainly heard that energy is not competitive in the north these days, and throughout Ontario.

She made the point that Georgia-Pacific requested "the government promptly complete the wood supply competitive process and, working with the industry, accelerate the movement towards co-operative, enhanced, sustainable forest licences." That's the model that works for them.

It's Georgia-Pacific's view "that the tenure reform model initially posed by the government, where the mills were disconnected from the supply, creates uncertainty and risk. The system where crown corporations, known as local forest management corporations, essentially manage the land base will most likely reduce the security of supply and increase our delivered wood cost. This experiment would pose a great risk during fragile economic times." That's what some of the other members have been calling "forestry LHINs."

We're hearing from one company that says this is a risky experiment, a road that we should not be going down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Northumberland–Quinte West has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** First of all, let me thank the folks that took the opportunity to add their two minutes to my comments: the members from Leeds–Grenville, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Peterborough and Parry Sound–Muskoka.

I'm going focus a little bit on the comments from the member from Leeds–Grenville and the fact that he commented that he has an objection to the formation of another crown agency or board to manage the interests of crown lands. He compared it to the LHINs. I guess that really gives some signal that the member opposite and his party have no respect for people who are appointed to best manage what they're good at, and that's providing a service for their communities.

They want to bring back the centralization, if they were ever to form a government, bring it back down here at Queen's Park. I must say, if that's a comparison to the LHINs, then I think if they were fortunate enough to form a government, how many hospitals would they close? How many more schools would they neglect and have mould in them? Obviously, that's the type of signal that he put on the table.

Frankly, I do respect the boards and commissions that are staffed by folks from local communities, who drive those, who know the interests of the business and leave the government out of it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've been looking forward to speaking on this bill.

I did listen to the member from Northumberland–Quinte West. I was curious about whether he actually knows one of his constituents, Rob Milligan. Rob Milligan is a teacher down there, and he's quite interested in serving the public.

This is a case of a bill that—I think, in honesty, the minister is trying to do the right thing. I did read his remarks; I have a copy of the Hansard here. I looked at it carefully, because it's an area in which I've had to listen more than speak. That's how you actually learn things, which is a revelation over there, I think.

His last remarks were quite telling. I think he quite genuinely meant it. Mr. Gravelle is from the north. He's the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, obviously. I believe, quite consciously, that he does speak strongly for the sector. He said, "Let's put our wood to work." That was his final remark, and I think he means it.

What I do is, I kind of look around for independent, objective assessments of what's being debated here. Often, we get briefing notes; we have ours. Ours says no; theirs says yes, basically. That's kind of how it works—there's a little more to it—although today there were two bills on which we voted with the government. They usually say, "And you voted against it." If we voted against it, it's bad; they have some poison pill in it.

For my reference, I'm looking at the Working Forest. The Working Forest is a publication for the industry. I know it's sent to a lot of members. Certainly all of the northern members would get it; they're probably very familiar with it. I was interested, editorially, in what they thought of this, so I went through it, and it's quite informative. It's a working document.

I can see that the industry in Ontario needs this kind of document today, because the industry is falling off the cliff in Ontario, for a lot of reasons—red tape would be one; high energy prices is another; high taxation is another.

They say they've had seven or eight years. The best evidence is to look to what's happening. Are we better off? We're paying a lot more. Are we better off? That's a fair question.

We shouldn't browbeat people who don't always agree with us. We should say, "Ask yourself, are you better off?" Is gas cheaper? Is home heating cheaper? Is your phone, your car insurance, your tuition cheaper? Is it easier to get into a hospital?

**Interjection:** Yes.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Is it easier to get into long-term care?

**Interjection:** Yes.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Is it any better? The answer, in most cases—

**Interjection:** Yes.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Let the people answer it. You see, they're trying to tell people how to think. They're trying to tell them what to drink, what to eat, when to go to bed, when to dry their clothes.

To the publisher, Judy Skidmore, and the editor, Phil Hearn, and the people involved in producing this: Thank you very much. It's important, very important.

What I did look for—Madam Speaker, this isn't a prop. This is actually made from pulp from northern Ontario. This is printed, I hope, on Ontario pulp.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Use it for the purpose that you have anticipated, as opposed to as a prop.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Madam Speaker—a most polite interruption.

"Mixed Reaction to Ontario's Tenure Reform Plans"—it seems to me, with mixed reactions, it's not like the perfect "let's get to work" thing. I'm going to quote it, because then people can re-quote it and they'll be talking to James Harrison, not to John O'Toole, who's from Durham. Of course, the Ganaraska forest is mostly in my riding, not that of the member from Northumberland-Quinte West. I've been going there since I was—I'd bring my children cross-country skiing there. Jerry Ouellette used to cut timber there; it was a clearance permit. Anyway, they'll be talking back to Brian Nicks. These are the two people who are cited in this.

I think to put some framework around this discussion, it's important also to help the viewer who may be follow-

ing this, or falling asleep, one or the other. There are a lot of acronyms used, especially in this industry here.

1720

MNR stands for Ministry of Natural Resources; I got that one. OFIA is the Ontario Forest Industry Association, and its present CEO is Jamie Lim, whom I met last night, and I did speak with her at length—a very intelligent, articulate person and a leader in women's issues, I believe, as well.

The OFIA is the Ontario Forest Industry Association, as I said; CFSA is the Crown Forest Sustainability Act; the SFL is the sustainable forest licence; the IFA is the independent forest audit; the FMPM is the Forest Management Planning Manual; the AOU is the area of undertaking; and the FMA is the forest management agreement.

These acronyms may crop up in here, and it's important when you look at Hansard—which will be printed tomorrow—that you can start by getting the acronyms all sorted out and explained and follow along my speech, which I'm going to be reading from the local paper. It says:

"Local forest management corporations (LFMCs) would be government agencies that manage crown forests and oversee the competitive sale of the timber in a given area." This is crown land, so that people bid on using the resource.

"Enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences"—sustainability is a big part of this—"would consist of a group of mills and/or harvesters that collectively form a new company to manage crown forests under the sustainable forest licence that is issued to them."

The sustainable forest licence has a program manual, which I mentioned, which tells them that they must replant certain species etc. It's quite a technical area. Actually, silviculture in itself is a very, very important renewable resource; some would say it's far better than wind power. Industrial wind turbines aren't as reliable. In my riding, it's a big problem.

"At the time, Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forests said 'this comprehensive overhaul of Ontario's wood allocation system would help build a strong forest industry in today's global economy.'" All fancy words; some lawyer wrote them. "It would help create investment opportunities and opportunities for jobs and economic prosperity."

We heard the member speak earlier today; the member from Nickel Belt gave the most impassioned account of the destruction in her riding over the past seven years—look it up; she spoke earlier today—a virtual litany of job after job, family after family being virtually dismantled. That's the truth, and I believe what she is saying.

She also spoke to the issue of another failed policy by the McGuinty government: the electricity policy. Somebody said earlier, "Who's paying 40 cents a kilowatt hour?" Well, for solar power in Ontario, you're paying—pardon me; I choke on this one—80.2 cents a kilowatt hour. That's more than the light bulb that you're lighting. Can you imagine? Ontario was built on safe, reliable,

affordable electricity at about five cents. Whoever heard of paying 80 cents for something and selling it for five cents? Quite honestly, if you want to look for a fundamental cause of the economy going over the cliff, look in the mirror. I'm telling them, and they don't seem to appreciate what it's doing to families and to the economy of Ontario, once the leader in our whole Confederation.

It goes on to say, "The Ontario government announcement to implementing tenure reform provided little relief to the management of Greenmantle Forest in Thunder Bay." Listen up: Here's another human story, a real story, not a political story—it's a real story. It goes on: "As one of the smaller forest management units in the province, it is likely to be among those in the government's sights" of widespread amalgamation and job loss.

"James Harrison, Greenmantle's general manager, said if the province could simply complete the wood supply competitive process the unit could prove itself economically viable." There's the manager, not some minister reading some bureaucrat's or lawyer's notes, telling you what is going on here.

That's a true story. I'm not making this up. I'm going to give it to Hansard, and they'll be printing it.

It goes on: "Harrison said the management unit is challenged right now because they are only able to sell"—listen to this—"35% of the poplar and birch and 50% of the conifer off the Lakehead forest. The competitive process is expected to bring in new business." What was meant before: American business.

"All the wood on the Lakehead forest was identified in the process as being available," said Harrison. "We see a need for a business that would use poplar because right now the poplar is not being totally used around Thunder Bay...." In other words, it can't sell the brush. "We feel we can stand on our own if we can move all of our volume"—all their forest materials. He goes on to say, "We don't need to look at the local forest management corporation scenario"—what we call the LHINs. "We could survive on our own without that."

Brian Nicks, Eacom Timber Corp.'s director of forestry for Ontario, "believes amalgamating some of Ontario's smaller forest ... units is inevitable and in the long run may prove to be beneficial."

This is an objective account of two participants in—I hope the minister is listening to them. This is not perfect. This framework, in all of what I've read—and I have more to say; I may ask for an extension of time.

"He said it is encouraging that the Ontario government is willing to reconsider some of the radical proposals that were causing" grave "concern within the industry." This is quite important. This is the industry, not our leader, Tim Hudak, who has asked us to reflect carefully on this because northern Ontario is a fragile economy. That's exactly what he said in caucus. We're not supposed to repeat that. But he cares about how it affects the family.

Here it says, "We were very concerned"—listen here—"about a revolutionary approach being taken as opposed to an evolutionary approach." How reasonable. Those are two reasonable northerners who bring a human

story to, "Let's work with the industry." Don't come up—if you read the bill, it gives all the power to the minister, totally. That's what these FMCs are. They're arm's-length agencies, another bureaucrat being paid big money to sit in some big office, like the LHINs, with furniture, and get all set up and maybe fly up—they won't stay up there; they'll fly up, probably in a helicopter or a Learjet or something. They won't be staying there. It would be too cold for them and perhaps a bit too much sawdust around.

The point being, it saddens me that this—get involved. The minister started, I said, by putting his boots on the ground—put the wood to work. I challenge him: Make these two young fellows right here, those young people, part of that process. You'll end up helping the north, not tying it up in red tape and more expense.

I wonder how much they're going to charge the industry, because I'll get into how the government gets their money. They have royalties on all the cuts.

They go on to say, "They were originally talking about having five to 15 forest management units versus the 43" that they have now. That rationalization is probably a good process. They're going to be bigger units and a lot more bureaucratic. I want to know what the appeal process is. When these people lose their licences, there will be heck to pay, let's put it that way.

They go on to say—I think, quite realistic. That paper I would recommend to you.

There's another quite interesting article in here talking about the Ontario Forest Industries Association's talking about the caribou habitat guidelines—more red tape. They're going to have to have little pens and feeding shelters. I don't know. It's kind of a nanny state for the caribous.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Are you making this up?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm not making it up; not a bit.

I'm actually going on to something more technical. What I did here is, I downloaded a paper. This is an independent consultant's paper. It's available online. You can call my office, too; I would be happy to provide it. It's by Williams, Clark and Wedeles, consultants in this area. They talk about a number of things, but I think it's best to start—here's what they say in short.

Madam Speaker, is there any chance I could get more time to speak on this? We'll seek unanimous consent because there's so much that hasn't been said on this bill. They've read the notes. Quite honestly, the member from Northumberland—Quinte West read the notes he was given almost perfectly.

1730

Now, this is this consultant's report, not partisan, because there are some decent things in this too. All the paper wasn't wasted.

It says, "Shortcomings: This discussion of various aspects of the province's forest management system has highlighted that it is those components that support planning, such as the guides and planning framework itself, that seem to be working reasonably well. The four principal shortcomings of the tenure system are" as follow.

Here are the four problems, Minister. Look up Hansard because—I shouldn't say the minister's not here, but I'm sure he's listening on television. This is one of the problems with it—there are four of them, and I'll read them:

“(1) Linking wood supply to individual mills means the forest is treated as a ‘cost centre’”—this is very important for competition—“and the dominant concern of the mills is to reduce the price they pay for the raw material,” which is the trees, the forest, “regardless of other considerations.”

Now, this is very important: The licensee who owns the crown forest or has been granted that owns these trees. It's usually an 80-year supply stake that they have, because it takes 80 years from when they cut the first tree down till they harvest the last one and replant; that first tree should be growing by the time they get back there. Of course, they won't be alive to prove it, but it's assumed it will be.

“(2) The current system includes many government-imposed wood commitments or directives which distort the marketplace and pose barriers to more competitive new entrants and incumbents.”

So there you are. There's the little manipulation thing there: the current system of government-imposed wood commitments. Do you know why? Because when the licensee gets it, they tie all his inventory to one consumer, therefore driving the price down. If all that timber or wood pulp or whatever it is was available to a market condition, they would be selling at a better price and those communities would end up with the trees in their community and it would give them more money. That's about the long and short of it.

Now, remember, Mr. Brown—and I know you spoke very well on this. You live there and I know you mean well and I'm not criticizing that. I think getting it right is the right politics of this whole thing. This thing has been going on since 1800—something-or-other and has survived and needs less and less intervention as opposed to more intervention processes. Communities have to be consulted, from aboriginals right through the whole community. Number three—I don't want to lose track here. I might need more time.

“(3) It does not foster a means of resolving a number of outstanding constitutionally based aboriginal issues including the need for fair access to wood fibre.”

There's the third one. It's not a jagged, nasty statement; it's consultation, basically, with all of the communities involved.

“(4) There is no incentive to invest in the forest above the minimum regulatory requirements for renewal and the system lacks incentives to market timber to the highest-valued use.”

So often we're using timber—the Atikokan timber project was mentioned earlier by the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Mr. Mauro. They're going to actually be fuelling the current coal plants at Nanticoke and those plants—probably Thunder Bay, Nanticoke—with wood, replacing coal with wood.

Now, let's put the facts on the table here. Trees are a store of carbon. The carbon is released when you burn it. A fire: You see the black smoke; it's carbon. The trees themselves grow when they intake carbon as part of photosynthesis. It's not technical. It's basic grade 7 science. The pages probably understand this stuff. When you burn the wood, you release the carbon.

So now they're going to tell us that these new wood plants are cleaner than the coal plants. Well, the science would have to hear that, and if there's a carbon tax, that won't be, because they have to pay for carbon. They can almost tell you how much carbon is in a tree by measuring it, and I've read that. I'm sure it will be more efficient for the north, better for the economy of the north, as opposed to importing the coal from Alberta. I fully agree with that. But let's be straight: If you want a plan that's going to help the north, we agree that working with the community is paramount.

For those who haven't been able—Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to have another 10 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member has asked for unanimous consent.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I heard a no.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I can't understand for a moment why. I haven't said anything that's cripplingly critical or caustic to anyone, but now I'm going to start. Premier McGuinty has really made a mess of something else. Here we have the north—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Comments and questions?

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** It was most entertaining to listen to the member from Durham, especially his last 20 seconds. I would have been quite ready to listen to the member for another 10 minutes, but I guess it was not the wish of the House, and we have to respect that.

Through it all, there are a couple of interesting points that come out. Why is it that we are reviewing this process, but there is nothing targeted at making sure that we get the highest value for our timber? I know that he spoke about a lot of things, but this is something he threw out there, and I think that it's worth considering. I think this is something we will hear if and when this bill goes into committee so that it is dealt with and, hopefully, modified.

He didn't mention, again, the list of paper mills and sawmills and pulp mills that I read earlier on this afternoon with all of the job losses associated with them. I just want to correct the record that those are not all from my riding. A number of them are from my riding, but a number of them are from other ridings in northeastern and northwestern Ontario. The number of layoffs that I read, I don't think there are that many workers in Nickel Belt. Even if we lost everybody in Nickel Belt, they wouldn't have made up all of the list of workers that I said had lost their jobs.

Some of the points that we have made, and he has made also, were policies that need to be looked at,

whether we looked at the cost of energy—and I'll keep saying it: Northern Ontario produces the greenest, cleanest, cheapest energy anywhere from falling water. We should be able to use it in northern Ontario for the prosperity of northern Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** I'm delighted to comment on my good friend from Durham's thoughtful intervention. I think people should reflect and members should reflect upon what's going on here. In northern Ontario today, there are millions of cubic metres of wood that have been allocated and they're not being used. That is why we—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Kill the industry.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown:** That is why the government has chosen to move forward with tenure reform. I know, and every member in the Legislature knows—I'm sure my friend from Nickel Belt and I'm certain my friend the minister and my friend from Thunder Bay–Atikokan have had numerous suggestions from small businesses that want to start up with a new product and a new way of using wood but have problems getting that allocation from the SFL holder. So it makes sense to find a way to let those smaller players, which sometimes become big players, get started to do that. That's why we're doing it. It will provide more opportunities for more jobs.

What's really interesting is to listen to my good friends, especially in the Conservative Party, complain about market pricing. The free enterprise party doesn't like market pricing. It's very entertaining.

Anyway, the tenure reform has gone through significant consultations already. I think my friends read from the Working Forest. My friend Judy Skidmore, the editor, formerly of Espanola and the Mid-North Monitor, makes some good points. Brian Nicks talks about the interests of the OFIA in this. We have their support. We're working hard to make sure that this bill is a good bill and works for—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Thornhill.

1740

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** It's a pleasure to stand up and add a couple of words on the comments of my friend from Durham, who always has a thoughtful presentation on anything. I've got to say, as a southern member, I don't have any forestry anywhere near Thornhill—we use a lot of the products—but I know a bit about it because it's part of my job to know a bit about everything and a lot about a few things.

One of the things I know a lot about is that my friend from Durham is one of that rare breed in this place. We all get literally hundreds of publications crossing our desks every week. You can't possibly read all of them, and even with assistance, you can't get everything annotated that you would want. But he always comes in here with publications like Working Forest or whatever happens to be pertinent to the bill under discussion, and brings some thoughtful debate to this place.

What we don't need, from my perspective, is more intervention on the part of the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty. Here is an act that could just as easily have been named the Ontario forestry industry tenure act, because what they're looking to do is to try to make that industry work again when, really, they're the ones who wrecked it. This is something else that's going to allow them to "fix" the forest industry. "Let's pick another sector," they said at the cabinet table at some point, "and maybe we can wrap it up in red tape as well."

The bottom line on this one is that the use of the term "LHINS"—and I'll explain that briefly for the people at home—refers to what they've done in creating an insulating layer that chews up hundreds of millions of dollars to run our health situation all over the province of Ontario. When you create these LFMCS, what you're doing in the forestry industry is what you've done to the health industry: chewed up hundreds of millions of dollars, to do what? To continue to manage what? A forestry industry—and you heard it from our friend from Nickel Belt—that the McGuinty government has all but killed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I've listened to most of the previous speeches here in the last hour or so. I must say I think the piece that my Conservative friends are missing is that what is before us today is what has been asked for by the industry itself.

As the member from Algoma–Manitoulin mentioned in his remarks, there is a lot of wood out there that is being underutilized and has been that way for a number of years, that was tied up and not available to be used to create employment in the province of Ontario. What we've brought forward through this process in this particular piece of legislation, as well as the direct wood supply competition, is an ability to take that wood that is standing there on the stump and create jobs, and that's what we're doing.

We had an event about two weeks ago—my colleague Michael Gravelle from Thunder Bay–Superior North—at a place called Garden River timber, if I've got the name correctly—and I forget the name of the proprietor; I apologize. He's been in business for 30-some years, had about six or eight employees working for him. This gentleman could not have been more ecstatic because, for the very first time in over 30 years of being a small private sector operation, he has a long-term secure wood allocation; he has it. This gentleman couldn't be happier. He announced the jobs that he was going to be able to create and the young people we were going to hire.

I spoke in here yesterday. The AbiBo sawmill in Thunder Bay received additional wood through a similar process. They will create 50 more additional jobs. The Atikokan Renewable Fuels piece that I spoke about yesterday through the wood supply competition that the industry partners themselves, the small employers themselves, asked us to do will create 95 jobs.

That's just the beginning. There are many more that have already occurred across the province. We're taking wood that wasn't being used, putting it back to work and creating employment in northern Ontario. I thought that's what they were interested in.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Durham has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to thank—the thoughtful responses from Nickel Belt, Algoma-Manitoulin, Thornhill and Thunder Bay-Atikokan. I really do feel we're actually trying to find the answer here as opposed to an excuse.

I think it's important to just explain a couple of things. In this whole report, timber pricing is very technical. It says, "Currently for each merchantable cubic metre of wood that is harvested, the licensee is required to pay the crown"—that's Dalton McGuinty—"a charge that varies by species, end product, and market conditions." These residual charges are part of the issue, where the people working in the wood don't get the money.

There's a whole issue here on trusts and how that money is set up in trusts to replenish the forests, and the most important is linking—and this is an important change.

"In contrast to the elements listed above, the tenure system attributes described in this and remaining sections ... have significant inherent inadequacies...." What it says here: "A key flaw in the current system"—as we know—"is the linkage between forest tenure"—owner, licensee—"and processing facility ...." They want to keep the price down so that they can actually process it and ship it to the US or somewhere else. That's the key thing: Leaving the value of the actual product in the community, I think, is paramount. It's just a small reminder.

The report says, objectively, that there are four shortcomings and these shortcomings should be addressed. They deal with: linking supply to the mill; the current system of government-imposed requirements; fostering a way of resolving disputes within communities, whether aboriginal or others; and no incentive for investing in the forests themselves. So what have we got? No payback to the community, no payback to the forest itself, and that means the sustainability argument, the language itself, is absolutely wrong. Sustainability means keeping the growing growing.

If you want to make a statement like the minister made in his final—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Bill 151, the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, attempts to enable the modernization of Ontario's forest tenure and pricing system. The objective appears to be: help make Ontario's timber supply and prices more responsive to the market demand; create new business opportunities for entrepreneurs; and facilitate greater local community and aboriginal participation in the sector.

Enacting the bill would amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. It would enable the incorporation of

Ontario's local forest management corporations, LFMCs, and the emergence of two new government models for sustainable forest licences: local forest management corporations and enhanced shareholder SFLs. The act would allow licensees to surrender a forest resource licence, subject to terms and conditions.

Unfortunately, it gives the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry the ability to arbitrarily cancel any existing wood supply agreement and make wood allocation subject to political favours. Stumpage fees will be affected, as the price of wood will go up during the competitive bidding process. Shocking to me is that this legislation will allow companies from Quebec, Manitoba and the US to outbid Ontario companies for wood supplies. These companies from other provinces have more money because they pay less for their hydro and they have more assets available to buy the wood.

Some 66% of Ontario, or about 70.4 million hectares, is forested, of which 90% is crown land. In the current system, the Crown Forest Sustainability Act provides for the granting of licences for harvesting forest resources on managed crown lands. Sustainable forest licences are set up for periods of up to 20 years and reviewed every five. They require the licensee to carry out renewal and maintenance activities necessary to provide for the sustainability of crown forests in the area covered by the licence. SFL holders bear significant management responsibilities: forest management planning, gathering forest information for the crown, and conducting operations in accordance with the crown's Forest Operations and Silviculture Manual.

Forest resource licences are set up for a period of less than five years. Where crown timber is harvested it is required that the licensee pay crown timber charges, also called stumpage fees.

Two new components envisioned in the legislation for forestry tenure reform are local forest management corporations and enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences, which are groups of mills and harvesters that collectively form a new company to manage crown forests under sustainable forest licences that are issued to them. The sustainable forest licences will require mill owners to form co-operative bodies that, among other things, allow opportunities for new business to access crown land. Coordination will occur among the Ministry of Natural Resources, the forest industry, aboriginal peoples and local stakeholders for both the LFMCs and the ESSFLs.

The act would enable the crown to grant a forest resource licence to an Ontario local forest management corporation. The act would also allow a licensee to surrender a forest resource licence subject to terms and conditions set out by the minister and permit the imposition of terms and conditions by the minister with respect to the transfer of forest resource licences.

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The evolution of this reform, according to a government release in mid-January, is that there would be the implementation of two test cases of LFMCs for a period

of five to seven years which would evaluate against a predefined set of criteria before general application of the tenure reform. The act introduced in February 2011 does not—I repeat, does not—mention any of the phased implementation or the two test cases. We're very interested in finding out why this has not been included. Industry experts are against broad application without the two test cases because it will create uncertainty within the industry.

An example of current shared licensing is the Abitibi River Forest in northeastern Ontario, which is being used by the government as an example of an enhanced co-op model. Abitibi River Forest Management Inc. is responsible for the development and preparation of a 20-year strategic forest management plan. The shareholders are AbitibiBowater, Grant Forest Products, True North Hardwood Plywood, Tembec, Little John Enterprises, Wahgoshig First Nation, Wahgoshig Resources, Taykwa Tagamou Nation, Moose Cree First Nation, Nighthawk Timber Co. and Timmins Forest Products.

The shareholder-managed sustainable forest licence for the Kenora forest area includes Weyerhaeuser and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, and also the Wabaseemoong First Nation signed on.

Some of the concerns that we have are:

There is no mechanism for changing the stumpage prices.

Companies will have to pay more for the wood.

Companies across the border, where the price of electricity is lower, will come to Ontario and have more money to bid on the wood, thus driving prices up and forcing Ontario companies out of business.

It has the potential to politicize the allocation of fibre.

It creates uncertainty at a time when the forest industry is in crisis, and it does not allow for investment due to this uncertainty.

To be certain that our position is completely clear, I'm going to repeat some of the issues made by our northern MPPs Howard Hampton and Gilles Bisson. MPP Bisson states clearly, "I want to start off by saying I disagree with the premise that this bill is needed in order to find a way to deal with unallocated timber. Could the unallocation process be made better? Obviously. Everything can be made better.... My point is to make an argument that you need this bill to be able to allocate unutilized timber—nothing could be further from the truth."

Bill 151 includes a section that says once you sign a licence with the crown—say a number of years ago on a particular forest—it is virtually impossible for your security of tenure to be lost unless you mess up. As a sustainable forest licence holder, you cannot lose your wood under the current system as long as you live up to the conditions of your licence. The conditions of your licence are well spelled out in the legislation and the regulations, but more importantly, in the forest management plan itself. As the holder of the licence, you have already agreed to hold up your end of the deal and live up to the conditions of your licence. As a licensee, because you have the security of the value of the wood and your licence, you can plan to make improvements that you feel

are necessary for the sustainability of the product and the ongoing ability to operate your company. These two tangibles give the licence holder the security to apply to a financial institution for loans to improve the product, increase production and, naturally, improve their business. As MPP Bisson has already made clear, if you start playing with the tenure system, and you start weakening the security of tenure for the forest companies, it is a very dangerous, dangerous thing with far-reaching impacts.

Speaking as one who lived through the Stelco buyout by US Steel, I know first-hand what instability can do to a once-proud industry, what it can do to women and men who have devoted their lives to turning out a good-quality product but, more importantly, what it does to an industry that once was proudly Canadian, proudly able to offer generations of the same family good, well-paying jobs with Canadian resources available to Canadian companies to keep Canadian jobs in Canada.

The instability that this piece of legislation could cause in the forestry industry could lead us down the same tragic path that Hamiltonians and Canadians suffered with the loss of Stelco. Pretty well everybody—municipalities; forest companies; the Ontario Forest Industries Association, OFIA; the owners of the mills; the workers in mills; the unions—nobody is happy with this.

As my colleague MPP Bisson said, you've got to ask yourself, if it doesn't pass the "Who's glad, who's mad and who's sad?" test, what are you up to? Why are you doing this?

"We have a good system. We have a system that for seven, eight or nine times, whatever it is that we've gone before the tribunals, they've agreed with us and said, 'No, Ontario does not subsidize its forestry industry.' Each and every time we've won. The Americans keep on coming back. That's a whole other argument" for another day. "But we've never lost before the tribunals."

Again, it is the fear of what the US will do. Why would we put ourselves in the Stelco situation when we already know what happened there? Why would we change something that has been proven to work by tribunals, where we've won? Why fix it if it isn't broken?

My colleague MPP Howard Hampton has spoken on the legislation, and he's very clear about what will happen, should this be passed into law. He said:

"One of the dangers of this bill, and I think the government needs to sit down and seriously think about it, is the fact that this bill, for the first time in history, will simply open up Ontario's crown forests to the highest bidder. All you have to do is look at section 5:

"The following are the objects of an Ontario local forest management corporation: ...

"(4) To market, sell and enable access to a predictable and competitively priced supply of crown forest resources."

"But the fact of the matter is, in Canada, we are subject to the World Trade Organization and NAFTA. If a mill located in Minnesota comes to my part of Ontario and says, 'We want to put in a bid on these crown forest

resources of Ontario,' the government can't disallow that. You can't say, 'You're not allowed to bid.' If you try to say, 'You're not allowed to bid,'" they'll take you to court, and a NAFTA or World Trade panel will rule in their favour.

"For the last 20 years, mills in the United States have been after—this is the real issue around softwood lumber—complete, full access to crown forests, whether they be in Ontario or elsewhere in Canada. They want to be able to bid. They want that wood fibre. Do they want that wood fibre in order to create jobs in Ontario? No. They want that wood fibre in order to access it here and ship it south of the border" to be processed. Will any of it be processed here? Not very much. I don't think so.

However, if this government is determined that it's

right on this, it should have the commitment to bring this bill to full public hearings. It should have the guts to hear from each sector that would be affected by these changes, on their home turf. It should have the guts to admit that it's wrong and withdraw this bill. If that's what the public, in full, province-wide, public hearings tells us, why won't they do it?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments? Questions and comments?

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1757.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
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Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Gélinas, France (NDP) <b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) <b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud Trinity–Spadina Cambridge	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) <b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York-Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin-Middlesex-London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough-Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches-East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London-Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga-Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth-Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe-Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey  
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson  
Kim Craitor, Bob Delaney  
Garfield Dunlop, Peter Fonseca  
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przedziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese  
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett  
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Pat Hoy, Helena Jaczek  
Norm Miller, Leeanna Pendergast  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przedziecki

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell  
Jim Brownell, Steve Clark  
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac  
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese  
Bill Mauro, David Orazietti  
Joyce Savoline  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown  
Donna H. Cansfield, Aileen Carroll, P.C.  
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman  
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast  
Jim Wilson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi  
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle  
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos  
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi  
Bas Balkissoon, Joe Dickson  
Sylvia Jones, Amrit Mangat  
Norm Miller, Yasir Naqvi  
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman  
Wayne Arthurs, Aileen Carroll, P.C.  
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette  
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals  
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
David Caplan, Kim Craitor  
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on the proposed transaction of the TMX  
Group and the London Stock Exchange Group / Comité  
spécial sur la transaction proposée entre le Groupe TMX et le  
London Stock Exchange Group**

Chair / Président: Gerry Phillips  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Frank Klees  
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs  
Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown  
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips  
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
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